2 MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Description of the Alternatives and Management Actions

This chapter presents the range of alternatives and summarizes the major management actions proposed for each alternative, organized by resource or resource program. The management goals and objectives are stated for each resource or resource use while the management actions developed to achieve the goals and objectives are described for each alternative. The effects of these management actions by alternative result in the projected environmental consequences analyzed in Chapter 4.

2.1.1 Introduction

The development of the five management alternatives included in the Proposed RMP/FEIS was guided by the legal authorities and planning criteria to address management issues. These included the NEPA and BLM planning regulations and policy, which are included in Appendix D. The purpose of developing alternatives is to prepare different combinations of resource uses to address the identified issues and management concerns and to resolve conflicts among uses. As a result, a range of resource management actions and allocations, consistent with the alternatives, was developed for each resource or resource use.

2.1.1.1 Resource Management Plan Goals

The mission of the BLM is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In order to accomplish this mission, the BLM has developed a "Strategic Plan" ("BLM Strategic Plan") containing a comprehensive set of broad goal statements and a subset of mission goals. Two goal statements and a subset of mission goals dealing with public land management are shown below. The complete "BLM Strategic Plan 2000-2005" is available at the BLM web site: www.blm.gov/nhp/info/stratplan.

Goal Number 1: Serve current and future publics.

- Provide opportunities for environmentally responsible recreation.
- Provide opportunities for environmentally responsible commercial activities.
- Preserve natural and cultural heritage resources.
- Reduce threats to public health, safety, and property.
- Provide land, resource, and title information.
- Provide economic and technical assistance.

Goal Number 2: Restore and maintain the health of the land.

- Understand and plan for the condition and use of the public lands.
- Restore at risk resources and maintain functioning systems.

The RMP incorporates the following goals identified under Part II, Vision, of the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy (USDI 2003):

- Sustain, and where necessary, restore the health of the forest, rangeland, aquatic, and riparian ecosystems.
- Provide a predictable, sustained flow of economic benefits within the capability of the ecosystems.
- Provide diverse recreational and educational opportunities within the capability of the ecosystems.
- Contribute to recovery and delisting of threatened and endangered (T&E) species, and 303(d) listed waters.
- Manage natural resources consistent with treaty and trust responsibilities to American Indian tribes.

The RMP also addresses the purpose and objectives for the CMPA as stated in the Steens Act. These are as follows:

- To manage the CMPA to conserve, protect, and manage the long-term ecological integrity of Steens Mountain for present and future generations;
- To maintain and enhance cooperative and innovative management projects, programs, and agreements between tribal, public, and private interests in the CMPA;
- To promote grazing, recreation, historic, and other uses that are sustainable;
- To conserve, protect, and ensure traditional access to cultural, gathering, religious, and archaeological sites on public land within the CMPA by members of the Burns Paiute Tribe and to promote cooperation with private land owners;
- To ensure the conservation, protection, and improved management of the ecological, social, and economic environment of the CMPA, including geological, biological, wildlife, riparian, and scenic resources;
- To promote and foster cooperation, communication, and understanding and to reduce conflict between Steens Mountain users and interests; and
- To ensure that a monitoring program for public land within the CMPA would be implemented so progress toward ecological integrity objectives can be determined.

In addition, goals and objectives were developed specific to each resource/use. These goals are found later in this chapter.

2.1.1.2 Ecosystem Management

As described by the ICBEMP "Summary of Scientific Findings" (USDA/USDI 1996), "Ecosystem management is scientifically-based land and resource management that integrates ecological capabilities with social values and economic relations to produce, restore, or sustain ecosystem integrity and desired conditions, uses, products, values, and services over the long term...." Ecosystem management "concentrates on overall ecosystem health and productivity through an understanding of how different parts of the ecosystem function with each other, rather than on achieving a set of outputs." Human activities, including social values, regarding use of public lands and biophysical components are part of the total picture.

The ICBEMP emphasized gathering, organizing, and understanding information at the basin scale. In order to apply the findings of ICBEMP to the local level (i.e., the Planning Area), management planning should go through a "step-down" process. "Step-down" is the process of applying broad scale science findings and land use decisions to site specific areas using a hierarchical approach in order to understand current resource conditions, risks, and opportunities (USDA 2000). Information developed through this process provides the context by which projects can be developed to meet multiple management objectives.

The ICBEMP describes four levels of analysis below the basin-level analysis. These are intended to provide the context to appropriately apply the scientific findings to individual national forests or BLM districts:

- Subregional analysis – programmatic or broad overview EIS such as those associated with an RMP;
- Mid-scale analysis–SBR;
- Watershed scale analysis; and
- Site specific NEPA analysis.

In order to better define issues and to identify ICBEMP findings applicable to the Planning Area and adjacent public lands, staff conducted a SBR between September 2001 and January 2002. The SBR, or the second layer of the step-down process, is an intergovernmental process tiering mid- and fine scale information to ICBEMP scientific findings. It is also an assessment of ecosystem processes and functions at the subbasin level.

The AMS (available at the Burns District Office) serves as the SBR report. Findings and recommendations from the SBR are carried forward into the RMP/EIS in the issues to be resolved and in the alternatives identified to resolve those issues. These findings and recommendations are identified in Appendix B.

2.1.1.2.1 Desired Range of Conditions

The DRC described below applies to all alternatives, and portrays the land, resource, or social and economic conditions that would begin to be established in 20 to 50 years if management goals were achieved. The length of time to achieve the DRC would vary by alternative depending on the resources involved, the theme of the alternative, and the management actions proposed under that alternative. Appendix P contains descriptions of habitat characteristics important to wildlife.

The following DRC is a description of what the physical and biological condition or degree of function would be or would be moving toward at the end of the 20- to 50-year timeframe. The DRC has been factored into the management goals of each resource management program.

2.1.1.2.2 Description of Desired Range of Conditions

Rangeland vegetation (sagebrush steppe) includes a mosaic of multiple-aged shrubs, forbs, and native perennial grasses. Shrub overstories are present in a variety of spatial arrangements and scales across the landscape level, including large continuous blocks, disjunct islands, and corridors. Plant communities not meeting DRC show upward trends in condition and structural diversity. Desirable plants continue to improve in health and vigor. New infestations of noxious weeds are not common across the landscape, and existing large infestations are declining. Populations and habitat of rare plant species and their associated communities are stable or continue to improve in vigor and distribution.

Large portions of the landscape have a protective soil cover of deep rooted plants and litter, which supports proper hydrologic function. In thin-soiled areas and other appropriate soils, biological soil crust are present that increase soil stability, contribute to nutrient cycles, and act as indicators of rangeland health.

Western juniper dominance is limited to rocky outcrops, ridges, and other historic (old growth) sites where wildland fire frequency is limited by lower site productivity and sparse fuels. Western juniper occurs in low densities in association with vigorous shrubs, grasses, and forbs (where site potential permits). Historic western juniper sites retain old growth characteristics. Quaking aspen groves occupy historic range and are in stable or improving condition.

Rangeland vegetation and water sources support viable, healthy herds of wild horses through time. Individual herds have diverse age structures, good conformation, and are quality animals exhibiting the characteristics unique to each herd. Wild horse numbers are in balance with the rangelands that support them. Improvements in grass/shrubland steppe and riparian areas increase the health of the herd.

The amount and diversity of wildlife habitat are maintained or improved through time. Late seral grass/shrublands exist in blocks of various sizes in well distributed patterns across the landscape. Ongoing management of rangeland habitat components and conditions (such as vegetation cover, forage, and roads) and of key areas helps to maintain big game populations near state wildlife agency objectives. Hunting opportunities continue to be provided throughout the Planning Area. Improvement in the condition of grass/shrubland steppe and riparian areas benefits a variety of wildlife species by increasing the quality, quantity, and variety of habitat. Such species include upland game, raptors, and nongame species. Management has helped to create the long-term habitat changes that contribute toward restoring some sensitive species and toward recovery of listed species.

The area provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities for a growing demand, as the population increases and urban dwellers seek to experience the open spaces commonly found on public land. Additional recreation facilities, restored and maintained recreation sites, and more intensive management are a few of the means used to meet the increased demand. Protection of the natural landscape is an important consideration when designing recreation facilities and planning for related activities. Certain areas are excluded from recreational development to preserve their natural character. Areas such as wilderness, WSRs, and ACECs preserve the integrity of special or unique values over the long term.

Upland soils have sufficient vegetation cover to minimize accelerated soil erosion. Physical and chemical soil properties are adequate for vegetation growth and hydrologic function appropriate to the specific soil type, landform, and climate.

Wildland and prescribed fire play an active role in defining the composition of vegetation and limiting the dominance of woody species including shrubs and invasive juniper.

Riparian areas and stream habitat conditions have improved as a result of protection and management. Watersheds are stable and provide for capture, storage, and safe release of water appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform. Most riparian/wetland areas are stable and include natural streamflow and sediment regimes related to contributing watersheds. Soil supports native riparian/wetland vegetation to allow water movement, filtration, and storage. Riparian/wetland vegetation structure and diversity are progressing toward controlling erosion, stabilizing streambanks, healing incised channels, shading water areas, filtering sediment, aiding in floodplain development, dissipating energy, delaying floodwater, and increasing recharge of ground water appropriate to climate, geology, and landform. Stream channels are narrower, water depth and channel meanders are increasing, and floodplains are developing. Stream channels and floodplains are making important progress in dissipating energy at high water flows and transporting and depositing sediment as appropriate for geology, climate, and landform. Riparian/wetland vegetation is increasing in canopy volume (height and width) and in healthy uneven-aged stands of key woody plants; increasing in herbaceous ground cover; and shifting toward late succession. Surface disturbances inconsistent with the physical and biological processes described above have been reduced. Disturbances such as roads, dispersed recreation sites, and inappropriate livestock use are decreasing as vegetation and soils recover naturally. There is no downward trend in riparian condition and function.

Human use of natural resources is managed to enhance fisheries, improve water quality, and promote healthy riparian conditions. Water quality is managed so that most streams are providing cool, clear, and clean water. High quality water is in greater demand from all users. Better regulation of runoff has improved the water supply from rangelands. There is increased infiltration on upland sites, increased ground water recharge, increased spring flow, reduced peak flow during floods, and increased stability of base flow during late summer and winter.

Management activities have been implemented on nearly all high risk sites to facilitate recovery of upland, riparian, aquatic, and water quality conditions. Improved aquatic habitat conditions allow populations of T&E aquatic species to stabilize and expand into appropriate, previously occupied habitat. Populations of native aquatic species are increasing.

Water quality is improved to provide stable and productive riparian and aquatic ecosystems. Water quality of high priority streams is within state standards, and the remaining streams have made important progress toward attaining those standards. Upland, riparian, and aquatic ecosystems are stable and productive to a degree that leads to acceptable water quality for identified beneficial uses. Improvement has occurred in stream channel integrity and channel processes, under which the riparian and aquatic systems developed. Hydrologic and sediment regimes (the characteristic behavior or orderly occurrence of a natural phenomenon or process) in streams, lakes, and wetlands are appropriate to the surrounding soils, climate, and landform. Instream flows are sufficient to support healthy riparian and aquatic habitats, and stream functions are stable and effective. Flooding streams discharge without substantial damage to the watershed. Riparian vegetation provides sufficient vegetation debris; provides adequate regulation of air and water temperatures during both summer and winter; and helps reduce surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration to levels characteristic of natural conditions. Riparian and aquatic habitats support populations of well-distributed native and desired nonnative plant, vertebrate, and invertebrate populations. The DRCs have been factored into the management goals of each resource management program.

A desirable social and economic quality of life would be established and maintained for local residents and visitors.

2.1.1.3 Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is a procedure in which decisions are made as part of an ongoing process of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and incorporating new information into strategies meeting the goals and objectives of ecosystem management. This process builds on current knowledge, observation, experimentation, and learning from experience. A continuous feedback loop allows for mid-course corrections in management to meet planned goals and objectives. In addition, it provides a model for adjusting goals and objectives as new information develops and when the public recommends management changes.

The complex interrelationships of physical, biological, and social components of the ecosystem and their reaction to land management practices are often not fully understood when a land use management plan is developed. Successful plans must have the flexibility to adapt and respond to new knowledge or conditions. The following processes briefly describe the four parts of adaptive management:

1. **Planning/Decision** – plan development or revision is the process leading to decision making, starting with issue identification and goal development. The next step is gathering information necessary to develop objectives for management direction that address issues and goals. The final stage of planning is to develop alternative management strategies that progress toward achieving management objectives; analyze the consequences of implementing the alternatives; and choose a preferred alternative for implementation.

2. **Implementation** – the process of putting plans and decisions into effect. Implementation includes short- and long-term actions taken to meet management objectives and to progress toward goals and the DRC. Unless otherwise stated, all management direction listed here is assumed to be implemented within ten years. Standards are defined as required management actions addressing the achievement of management goals. In certain situations, standards can include requirements that no action be taken.

3. **Monitoring** – should detect changes early enough in the process so that management activities can be modified to work toward achieving management objectives. Monitoring data provide information on the condition and trend of the ecosystem, and can indicate whether or not goals and objectives are being met. Data can also identify management strategies that appear to be working in the short term.

4. **Evaluation/Assessment** – the point at which plans and monitoring data are reviewed. This phase of adaptive management is used to judge the success of existing plans in meeting or progressing toward objectives and to make recommendations for mid-course corrections. The understanding gained through evaluations is critical to managing sustainable, healthy, and productive ecosystems. Evaluations are a key component of the adaptive management process. An evaluation may lead to a change in management actions that pursues the objectives identified in the approved RMP and resulting activity plans.

2.1.1.3.1 Watershed-Scale Assessment

The watershed scale is the third layer in ecosystem analysis and planning. Where management actions are likely to have a watershed scale effect, watershed scale assessment would be used, if necessary, to assure that potential actions are evaluated with an overall understanding of the capabilities and limitations of specific watersheds. Information gained through analysis at this scale would be used in the adaptive management process, and may support land management decisions as well as development of ecologically sustainable programs and projects.

2.1.1.3.2 RMP Monitoring

The BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-9) call for the monitoring of resource management plans on a continual basis with a formal evaluation done at five-year intervals. The RMP would be monitored on a continual basis to allow up-to-date evaluations and to respond to changing situations. Management actions arising from activity level plan decisions would be evaluated for consistency with RMP objectives. Monitoring plans would assess implementation of the following:

- Satisfactory progress toward objectives through management actions;
- Actions consistent with current policy;
- Original assumptions correctly applied and impacts correctly predicted;
- Satisfactory mitigation measures;
- Consistency of the RMP with the plans and policies of state and local government, other federal agencies and Indian tribes; and
- New data availability that would require plan alterations.

RMP monitoring would be conducted at multiple levels and scales. Monitoring would be conducted in a manner to allow localized information to be compiled and considered in a broader regional context, thereby addressing both local and regional issues. At the project level, monitoring would examine how well specific management direction has been applied on the ground and how effectively it produces expected results. Monitoring at broader levels would measure how successfully projects and other activities have achieved the objectives for those management areas.

Monitoring results would provide managers with the information needed to determine whether an objective has been met, and whether or not to modify the management direction. Findings obtained through monitoring, together with research and other new information, would provide a basis for adaptive management changes to the plan. The processes of monitoring and adaptive management share the goal of improving effectiveness and permitting dynamic response to increased knowledge and a changing landscape.

If monitoring and evaluation indicate that modifying the plan is necessary, the Andrews Field Manager or the Three Rivers Field Manager and the Burns District Manager would determine what, if any, changes are necessary to show that management actions are consistent with RMP objectives. If the District Manager finds that a plan amendment is necessary, an environmental analysis of the proposed change, consistent with the NEPA, would be conducted and a recommendation on the amendment made to the State Director. If approved, it may be implemented 30 days after public notice. A plan amendment may be initiated because of the need to consider monitoring findings, new data, new or revised policy, or a proposed action that may result in a change in the scope of resource uses or a change in the terms, conditions, and decisions of the approved plan.

Potential minor changes, refinements, or clarifications in the plan may take the form of maintenance actions. Maintenance actions incorporate minor data changes and are usually limited to minor refinements and documentation. Plan maintenance would not result in expansion of the scope of resource uses or restrictions, nor change the terms, conditions, and decisions of the approved RMP. Maintenance actions are not considered plan amendments and do not require a formal public involvement and interagency coordination process.

Monitoring is an essential component of natural resource management because it provides information on the relative success of management strategies. The implementation of the RMP would be monitored to show that these management actions: (1) follow prescribed management direction (implementation monitoring); (2) meet or progress toward desired objectives (effectiveness monitoring); and (3) are based on accurate assumptions (validation monitoring).

2.1.2 Overview of the Alternatives

2.1.2.1 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

The range of alternatives was sufficiently broad to accommodate all other variations of existing alternatives. No other alternatives were presented that differed sufficiently from the five existing alternatives to warrant independent consideration.

2.1.2.2 Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

The BLM planning process calls for the development of goals, objectives and actions to manage each of the resources and uses within the Planning Area. Every decision proposed through the planning process is actually a string of components. The primary components are the goals, objectives and management actions. Additional components include management framework and monitoring. Each of these components is defined as follows:

Management Framework - primary reasoning behind the importance of pursuing the stated management goal.

Management Goal - a broad statement of a desired outcome. Goals are usually not quantifiable and may not have established timeframes for achievement.

Management Objective - a description of a desired condition for a resource. Objectives can generally be quantified and measured and, where possible, have established timeframes for achievement.

Management Action - measures that are to be undertaken to achieve the stated management objective. Management actions state management activities or land uses that are allowed, restricted, or excluded, and provide the basis for subsequent implementation and effectiveness monitoring.

Monitoring - assessment of the resources is conducted to determine whether or not the identified management objectives are being accomplished.

Alternatives would generally meet the goals that have been identified for all resources. However, there are differences between alternatives. These differences address how quickly the management goals are being met; the degree to which

they are met; the priorities within the program; the emphasis placed on different management activities, and whether those actions are active or passive. They also identify what resources or uses society is willing to forego.

Integrated resource management was emphasized in formulating the alternatives. A primary concern was that all major ecological and socioeconomic systems go through the selection of specific management actions. Public input received through the planning process was considered in the development of alternatives.

The management goals associated with the alternatives may not be completely met over the life of the plan (up to 20 years). Funding and staffing levels would affect rates of implementation, and projected implementation rates may vary from alternative to alternative, depending on the cost of prescribed management activities. All alternatives would follow existing laws, regulations, and guidelines.

2.1.2.3 Management Themes of the Alternatives

The following is a description of the five alternatives considered in detail:

Alternative A (No action. Continues current management):

This alternative would continue management under the existing Andrews MFP and amendments, and the Andrews Grazing Management Final EIS and Rangeland Program Summary as well as the Three Rivers RMP. In addition to these, the dictates of the Steens Act and the various existing activity plans would apply to the CMPA. Resource values and sensitive habitats would receive management emphasis at current levels. Emphasis would focus on maintaining existing conditions. No comprehensive plan for restoration of degraded systems would be used. Restoration would take place on a case-by-case basis and would utilize either active or passive methods.

Alternative B (Excludes commodity production and limits other uses to maximize natural processes):

This alternative would exclude all permitted discretionary uses of the public land including, but not limited to, livestock grazing, mineral sale or leasing, realty actions, recreation uses requiring permits, and new commercial ROWs. The BLM would petition the Department of Interior to withdraw the entire Planning Area from locatable mineral entry. This alternative would allow no commodity production and would include only those management actions necessary to maintain or improve natural values and protect life and property. Any management actions would utilize primarily passive methods. Some components of the alternative may not be possible to implement in the CMPA because of legal requirements and constraints of the Steens Act, but the alternative is included for purposes of impact analysis and comparison.

Alternative C (Emphasizes protection of natural values):

This alternative emphasizes the restoration of natural systems that are degraded and the maintenance of those that are functioning at a high level of condition. Commodity production would be constrained to protect natural values and systems that are in advanced ecological status or to accelerate improvement in those that are in less than advanced ecological status. Constraints to protect sensitive resources would be the most restrictive. In some cases and in some areas, commodity production could be excluded to protect sensitive resources, while still providing for overall sustainable commodity production as provided for in the Steens Act. Both active and passive restoration methods would be utilized to achieve management goals.

Proposed RMP (Balances cultural, economic, ecological, and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices):

This alternative emphasizes natural resource use, protection, and environmental health, and places high importance on balancing cultural, economic, ecological, and social values. This would be accomplished within the limits of the natural system's ability to provide commodities on a sustainable basis and within the constraints of laws and regulations, including the Steens Act as it pertains to the CMPA. This alternative encourages cooperative management of the Planning Area by collaborative arrangements with land owners, permit holders, other land managers, and interested parties. This alternative recognizes that the long-term cultural, economic, social, and ecological integrity of the Planning Area are intertwined and cannot be maintained without involving land owners, permit holders, local and tribal governments, and interested parties in relationships involving cooperation, consultation, and coordination. This alternative would balance the values that through the generations created the area's cultural and physical environment. Constraints to protect sensitive resources would be implemented, but would be less restrictive than under Alternative B, so that sustainable commodity uses and production would be maintained.

Alternative E (Emphasizes commodity production and public uses):

This alternative would emphasize commodity production and production of goods and services such as mining, grazing, commercial recreation, harvesting commercial woodlands products, and tourism. Under this alternative, constraints on commodity production for protection of sensitive resources would be the least restrictive possible within legal limits, while still meeting the requirements of the Steens Act for management of the CMPA. Potential impacts to sensitive resources would be mitigated on a case-by-case basis. Emphasis would be on maintaining resource conditions where required. Restoration actions that would enhance commodity production would utilize primarily active methods. Other restoration actions would utilize passive methods.

2.2 Air Quality

2.2.1 Goal - Maintain, restore, or protect air resources to support public health, visibility, and regional haze standards and goals.

2.2.1.1 Management Framework

Smoke is a factor that may affect a land manager's ability to use larger and more frequent wildland fire for restoration and maintenance of fire dependent ecosystems.

The Clean Air Act (CAA) requires federal agencies to comply with all federal, state, and local air pollution requirements. The CAA also requires each state to develop a state implementation plan (SIP) to demonstrate that the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) are attained and maintained for the criteria pollutants. The DEQ is responsible for producing the SIP, but delegates the smoke management portion to the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). As part of the SIP, the ODF developed instructions and requirements for wildland and prescribed fire emissions in the smoke management plan. The smoke management plan does not cover those portions of the areas with range lands or agricultural lands outside of the Willamette Valley, Oregon.

The NAAQS are described in the CAA. The NAAQS have been established for six pollutants. Of these six criteria pollutants, natural resource management activities largely affect only the production of particulate matter (PM). However, most PM of concern is produced from fire and most of this is less than ten microns in diameter (PM_{10}), which is the size class that is currently regulated under the CAA. PM_{10} produced from fire does not seriously affect forest and rangeland ecosystems because fire is a natural part of these systems. However, it does have effects on human health. A NAAQS has also been established for $PM_{2.5}$. The method for determining attainment with the NAAQS changed with the 1990 amendments to the CAA, to require several years of monitoring before a determination can be made. The attainment status for $PM_{2.5}$ in the Planning Area has not yet been determined. However, the determination should be completed in 2004 or 2005.

Southeast Oregon has been designated as a "clean air source" by the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission. The EPA has finalized the regional haze rule and states, including Oregon, are in the process of updating their smoke management plans to incorporate regional haze provisions. At the time of the publication of the Proposed RMP/FEIS, the additional requirements for the smoke management plan are not known. Once the requirements are finalized, the BLM will comply with the provisions of the Oregon Smoke Management Plan.

2.2.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Manage wildland fires to avoid degradation of the airshed.

Management Common to All Alternatives

The BLM will cooperate with other federal, state, and local governments on smoke management related to wildland fires. This cooperation may include the use of a voluntary communication plan.

Alternative A

Conduct prescribed fire while meeting federal and state air quality and smoke management standards. An estimated average of 5,000 to 20,000 acres would be burned per year using prescribed fire.

Alternative B

Allow wildland fire while meeting federal and state air quality and opacity standards. Prescribed fire would be used to a limited degree. Natural fire processes would be allowed to operate in the Planning Area.

Alternative C

Utilize wildland fire while meeting federal and state air quality and opacity standards. Under this alternative, prescribed fire and wildland fire use to achieve resource management objectives would not be limited.

Proposed RMP

Utilize wildland fire while meeting federal and state air quality and opacity standards. Under this alternative, prescribed fire and wildland fire use to achieve resource management objectives would not be limited. Ideally, a limited amount of area would be burned, which would enable landscape scale objectives to be achieved in years when those opportunities are available.

Alternative E

Utilize wildland fire while meeting federal and state air quality and opacity standards. Under this alternative, prescribed fire and wildland fire use to achieve resource management objectives would be limited.

Objective 2. Manage mining and aggregate operations to avoid degradation of the airshed.

Alternative A

The BLM would require air quality permits from the DEQ for all operations in the Planning Area. In addition, the BLM would require dust abatement measures at mining operations.

Alternative B

The BLM would withdraw the remainder of the Planning Area from mineral entry and development.

Alternative C

Same as Alternative B.

Proposed RMP

Same as Alternative A.

Alternative E

Same as Alternative A.

Objective 3. Manage authorized land use activities to avoid degradation of the airshed.

Alternative A

The BLM would require dust abatement measures for authorized activities on a case by case basis.

Alternative B

The BLM would require dust abatement measures for authorized activities necessary for basic maintenance and public health and safety on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative C

Same as Alternative A.

Proposed RMP

Same as Alternative A.

Alternative E

Same as Alternative A.

2.2.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.3 Water Resources

2.3.1 Goal - Maintain, restore, or improve water quality and quantity to sustain the designated beneficial uses on public lands.

2.3.1.1 Management Framework

The Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1977, as amended, required the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. The State of Oregon, under delegated authority and oversight by the EPA, defines the beneficial uses, and establishes policies and standards relative to managing the quality of Waters of the State. Water quality is managed by the DEQ through implementation of the Antidegradation Policy and supporting policies defined in Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 340-041-0026, which includes the High Quality Waters Policy, Outstanding Resource Waters Policy, and Water Quality Limited Waters Policy. The purpose of the Antidegradation Policy is to guide decisions that affect water quality such that unnecessary degradation from point and nonpoint sources of pollution is prevented, and to protect, maintain, or improve existing surface water quality relative to designated beneficial uses. Beneficial uses designated for the Malheur Lakes Basin include domestic water supply, livestock watering, irrigation, salmonid and resident fish habitat, wildlife and hunting, fishing, water contact recreation, and aesthetic quality. High Quality Waters Policy and Outstanding Resource Waters Policy generally apply to maintenance and protection where existing water quality meets or exceeds those levels necessary to support beneficial uses. The Water Quality Limited Waters Policy addresses those waters that do not currently meet water quality standard(s).

The BLM, as a Designated Management Agency, is responsible pursuant to the CWA for implementing land management activities that maintain, protect, or improve the quality of waters under their jurisdiction. In addition to the CWA, numerous laws, regulations, policies, and Executive Orders direct the BLM to manage water quality for the benefit of the nation and its economy (Appendix D). Thus, the BLM is required to maintain water quality where it meets state water quality standards and to improve water quality where it does not meet standards. Potential nonpoint source pollution is the primary water quality issue associated with public land management and is the focus of this discussion. Management of nonpoint source pollution is conducted through the development and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) during activity level planning and analysis. BMPs are defined as methods, measures or practices selected by an agency to meet its nonpoint source control needs. BMPs include but are not limited to structural and nonstructural controls, and operation and maintenance procedures. BMPs can be applied before, during, and after pollution-producing activities to reduce or eliminate the introduction of pollutants into receiving waters (40 CFR 130.2(m), EPA's Water Quality Planning and Management). In the context of public land management, the development and implementation of BMPs are primarily relevant to actions such as recreation, grazing, fuels and transportation management. Further, the design and implementation of land management actions and BMPs are relative to the management of upland and riparian vegetation, and the associated attributes and processes that facilitate watershed function.

BMPs are identified as part of the NEPA process, with interdisciplinary involvement. Since the control of nonpoint sources of pollution is an ongoing process, refinement of BMP design may be necessary. This adaptive management process can be described in five steps: (1) selection of design for a specific BMP; (2) application of the BMP; (3) monitoring; (4) evaluation; and (5) feedback. Data gathered through monitoring is evaluated and used to identify changes needed in BMP design, application, or in the monitoring program. The Forest Service and BLM Protocol for Addressing CWA Section 303(d) Listed Waters (Protocol) outlines the approach for the BLM to meet obligations for contributing to the management of the state's impaired waters. The Protocol was developed by the USFS, BLM, EPA and DEQ, as well as other agencies. The Protocol recognizes Water Quality Restoration Plan(s) (WQRPs) as the primary mechanism

to address and restore impaired waters on BLM administered lands. WQRPs or equivalent would serve the purpose of surface water temperature management plan(s) described in OAR 340-041-0026.

A watershed/subwatershed priority list (Table 2.3.1) was generated to generally guide assessment of ecosystem conditions, development of site specific management actions and associated short-term and intermediate monitoring objectives, and to provide a context of evaluating progress toward plan level objectives and goals. Work would focus on higher priority areas; however, other areas may require attention to address site specific needs. The following list describes the criteria used to prioritize watersheds and the process that would be used to change priorities, if necessary.

- Legal mandates (CWA, Endangered Species Act [ESA], WSRs Act, etc.);
- Resources at risk or of concern;
- Potential for recovery;
- Resource conflicts or controversy;
- Opportunity for interagency or partnership assessments;
- Field staff knowledge of the area; and
- Current ongoing or anticipated future management opportunities.

2.3.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Comply with state and federal requirements to protect public waters.

Management Common to All Alternatives

To reasonably prevent degradation of water quality, BMPs (Appendix F) would be prescribed and implemented at the activity plan level.

The management of riparian areas is an important component of restoring water quality, and would differ among the alternatives.

Objective 2. Protect all designated beneficial uses by preventing or limiting nonpoint source pollution; maintain or improve existing water quality and quantity through implementation of BMPs.

Management Common to All Alternatives

To reasonably prevent degradation of water quality, BMPs (Appendix F) would be prescribed and implemented at the activity plan level. These BMPs would also be directed toward management practices to facilitate maintenance or improvement of attributes (i.e., vegetation, channel geometry) identified through PFC assessment or other qualitative or quantitative methods.

The management of riparian areas is an important component of restoring water quality, and would differ among the alternatives.

Alternatives A and E

Maintain existing developed water sources (i.e. spring developments, reservoirs, and wells) and develop new sources through project level planning to promote the distribution and quantity of available water for beneficial uses such as wildlife, livestock or wild horses. The BLM would rely on the DEQ to determine and designate ecologically important cold-water refuges.

Alternative B

Inventory developed water sources (i.e. spring developments, reservoirs, and wells) and evaluate contribution to beneficial uses though site specific assessments. Maintain existing water developments in the CMPA that contribute to beneficial uses; allow natural processes to reclaim water developments that are determined through site specific assessment to not contribute to beneficial uses, except where necessary for wild horse management. Allow natural processes to reclaim existing water developments in the AMU, except where necessary for wild horse management.

Through watershed assessment, WQRP, or other processes, stream reaches or sites would be identified that provide or contribute summertime cold-water habitat in subwatersheds where stream temperatures limit the distribution and abundance of aquatic species. Protection measures (BMPs) in WQRPs, or activity level plans for such reaches/sites

would be identified and implemented. The BLM would coordinate with the DEQ on locations and rationale of stream reaches/sites for evaluation as ecologically important cold-water refuges.

Alternative C

Same as Alternative B, except existing developed water sources in the CMPA and AMU that contribute to beneficial uses would be maintained. Active and passive restoration efforts may occur in reclaiming developed water sources determined as no longer providing beneficial uses, such as the No Livestock Grazing Area of the Steens Mountain Wilderness. Existing and future water developments would be maintained or implemented when determined to contribute to beneficial uses or to facilitate management, or protection of off-site natural values, such as water quality and riparian resources through distribution of wildlife, livestock, or wild horses.

Proposed RMP

Same as Alternative C, including specific emphasis on reclaiming existing developments in the designated No Livestock Grazing Area of the Steens Mountain Wilderness to facilitate cooperative management and future water resource developments on public and private lands through legal processes of the Oregon Department of Water Resources.

Objective 3. Manage impaired waters on public lands listed under Section 303(d) of the CWA to restore beneficial uses and to improve water quality so that listing is no longer warranted.

Management Common to All Alternatives

The status of waters identified on the 303(d) list would be evaluated. Impairment would be validated or, in cases where water quality improvement has resulted from restoration activities since the listing, evaluation may suggest that the listing is no longer warranted. In cases where the listing is validated, management measures that are sufficiently stringent to restore water quality may be recognized, especially in areas such as wilderness and WSRs where such management may be required to meet other objectives. In other impaired waters, WQRPs would be developed and implemented. Other available mechanisms may be explored for removing impaired waters from the 303(d) list, such as changes in water quality standards. The development and implementation of sufficiently stringent measures and WQRPs to address water quality would be based upon assessment and monitoring of existing activity level management, resource management alternatives identified through this RMP, appropriate BMPs, and subsequent activity level planning efforts. Site/reach specific objectives, guidelines, or standards would be determined through the development of the WQRP and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL).

Alternative A

Under this alternative, current management would continue. Riparian and adjacent upland areas that influence 303(d) listed waterbodies would be managed according to site or reach specific management objectives identified in activity level plans and modified, as necessary, relative to WQRPs and TMDLs. Development and implementation of WQRPs would follow the TMDL schedule outlined by the DEQ.

Alternative B

All perennial and intermittent waters would be managed toward an advanced ecological status of riparian vegetation communities. Maintenance, protection or restoration of riparian and aquatic function and processes would be emphasized through specific management actions and performance measures identified in the relevant WQRP and TMDL, respectively. The development and implementation of WQRPs and associated management (BMPs) would be generally guided by the stream/watershed priority list (Table 2.3.1) along with consideration of new circumstances or emerging opportunities. Initial WQRP priority would be assigned to waters where Lahontan cutthroat trout, protected pursuant to the ESA, are the most sensitive beneficial use. Natural processes would be emphasized and active restoration would be limited through planting riparian vegetation along reaches/sites that are not likely to achieve or progress toward attainment of advanced ecological status within the RMP goal timeframe of 20 to 50 years.

Table 2.3.1: Priority Streams/Subwatersheds Identified to Guide Development of Watershed Management Actions and Water Quality Restoration Plan(s) for the Planning Area

PLANNING AREA PRIORITY STREAMS/WATERSHEDS			
ALVORD SUBBASIN (TMDL 2004)			
Relative Priority	**Location**	**Stream**	**Rationale**
1	East Steens Mountain	Little McCoy**, Mosquito*, Willow*, Little Wildhorse***, Cottonwood**, Big Alvord**, Little Alvord**, Pike**, Wildhorse***	303(d) List; Lahontan cutthroat trout (ESA); Allotment Management Plans (2004); Biological Opinion(s); Wilderness/WSA
2	Pueblo Mountain	Van Horn*, Denio*, Little Cottonwood,	303(d) List; Lahontan cutthroat trout (ESA); Biological Opinion(s); WSA
9	Trout Creek Mountains	Big Trout***, East Fork Big Trout***, Little Trout***	303(d) List; rainbow-cutthroat trout hybrid; WSA
DONNER UND BLITZEN SUBBASIN (TMDL 2010)			
3	Upstream of Page Springs	Donner und Blitzen*, Little Blitzen*, Ankle*, Mud*, Big Indian*, Indian*, Deep*, Fish*, Little Indian**	303(d) List; redband trout, Malheur mottled sculpin, and Columbia spotted frog; RTR; Aquatic Stronghold (redband trout); Priority Watershed; Wilderness; WSR
7	Downstream of Page Springs	Bridge**, Mud**	Redband trout, Malheur mottled sculpin, Columbia spotted frog; WSA
6	Downstream of Page Springs	Kiger**, Little Kiger**	Redband trout and Malheur mottled sculpin; WSR; Wilderness
5	Downstream of Page Springs	McCoy*, Cucamonga**	303(d) List; redband trout, Malheur mottled sculpin, and Columbia spotted frog
11	Downstream of Page Springs	Krumbo**	Redband trout (possible introduced rainbow / hybrids)
GUANO SUBBASIN (TMDL 2010)			
4	Catlow Rim	Home*, Threemile**	303(d) List; redband trout and Catlow tui chub; Wilderness
HARNEY-MALHEUR LAKES SUBBASIN (TMDL 2010)			
8		Riddle*, Coyote**	303(d) List; redband trout and Malheur mottled sculpin
10		Smyth**	Redband trout

*303(d) List/T&E, Candidate, or BLM Special Status aquatic species present
**T&E, Candidate, and/or BLM Special Status aquatic species present
***303(d) List/nonsensitive aquatic species

Alternative C

Management under this alternative would be the same as Alternative B; however, active restoration may be pursued to initiate or increase the rate of progress toward advanced ecological status of riparian vegetation communities.

Proposed RMP

All perennial waters listed under Section 303(d) of the CWA, as well as contributing perennial and intermittent streams, would be managed toward an appropriate ecological status to attain or progress toward attainment of water quality standards or other surrogate measures of water quality standards necessary to protect beneficial uses. Determination of appropriate ecological status to protect beneficial uses, and implementation of BMPs to maintain, protect or restore riparian and aquatic function and processes would be identified in the relevant WQRP and TMDL. The development and implementation of WQRPs and associated management (BMPs) would be generally guided by the stream/watershed priority list (Table 2.3.1) along with consideration of new circumstances or cooperative management opportunities. Initial WQRP priority would be assigned to waters where Lahontan cutthroat trout, protected pursuant to the ESA, are the most sensitive beneficial use.

Alternative E

Management under this alternative would be the same as Alternative A; however, development and implementation of WQRPs would be generally guided by the stream/watershed priority list (Table 2.3.1) along with consideration of new circumstances or emerging opportunities.

2.3.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.4 Soils and Biological Soil Crusts

2.4.1 Goal 1- Manage soils on public lands to maintain, restore, or improve soil erosion classes, watershed health, and areas of fragile soils.

2.4.1.1 Management Framework

Soils provide the foundation for vegetation growth and site productivity. Management goals for vegetation, watershed, wildlife and livestock are more difficult to achieve without healthy, productive, and intact soils. Within the semiarid Planning Area, soils are young and poorly developed. Biological and chemical soil development processes such as rock weathering and decomposition, plant material decomposition, accumulation of organic matter, and nutrient cycling proceed slowly in this environment. Due to slow soil recovery processes, the disruption of soils can lead to long-term changes in soil ecology and productivity.

2.4.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Manage mineral soil to limit accelerated erosion on critical sites, protect soil characteristics on noncritical sites, and maintain or improve existing infiltration and permeability rates.

Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, C, and E

BMPs would be implemented to protect and manage soil for all ground disturbing activities including new projects, livestock grazing, and road maintenance and construction. See Appendix F for a complete description of BMPs.

Alternative B

Natural processes would affect soil conditions in the Planning Area except where management is necessary to arrest excessive soil movement on critical sites.

2.4.2 Goal 2 - Increase the understanding of the management of Northern Great Basin biological soil crusts.

2.4.2.1 Management Framework

Biological soil crusts (also known as cryptogamic, biotic, microbiotic, and microphytic crusts) play a role in a functioning ecosystem. For an expanded discussion on how biological soil crusts contribute to the functional, structural, and compositional parts of a functioning ecosystem, see the technical reference TR-1730-2 (Biological Soil Crusts: Ecology and Management 2001).

Biological soil crusts may represent up to 70 percent of the living cover in some arid ecosystems (Belnap 1992). In addition to providing biological diversity, biological soil crusts contribute to soil stability through increased resistance to erosion, nutrient cycling, and microtopography formation (TR-1730-2).

Guidance contained in 43 CFR 4180 directs public land management toward the maintenance or restoration of the physical function and biological health of vegetative ecosystems. The 1997 Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for public Lands in Oregon and Washington (S&Gs) (Appendix G) also provide guidance on this subject.

Biological soil crusts are one of at least twelve potential indicators used in evaluating watershed function for uplands. The condition or degree of function of a site in relation to the standards, and its trend toward or away from any standard, is determined through the use of reliable and scientifically sound indicators. The consistent application of such indicators can provide an objective view of the condition and trend of a site when used by trained observers (USDI 1997). The Andrews/Steens RMP will provide for monitoring of the indicators of rangeland health, including biological soil crusts, and that the BLM will use the data resulting from this monitoring to inform decisions regarding management of grazing and other resource uses (USDI Office of Hearings and Appeals settlement of OR-020-97-01 and OR-020-96-01).

The BLM will then develop a soil crust monitoring strategy appropriate to the Pueblo-Lone Mountain Allotment (USDI Office of Hearings and Appeals settlement of OR-020-97-01 and OR-020-96-01). Action items in the Proposed RMP/FEIS are specifically related to the strategy for biological soil crust monitoring that is being developed by the Burns BLM.

Management actions authorized or implemented by the BLM could influence future biological soil crust communities. These actions may include season, intensity, and duration of livestock grazing; the influence of wildland fire and fire suppression activities; emergency fire rehabilitation and reintroduction of grazing following fire; the use of natural fuel breaks and management-created fuel breaks to protect all resources from frequent fire return intervals; rehabilitation and reclamation actions following soil disturbing activities; OHV and mechanized vehicle use; wild horse management; recreational use; and mining.

2.4.2.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Collect biological soil crust data within the Planning Area.

Management Common to All Alternatives

A standard monitoring methodology would be developed and implemented to monitor the Pueblo-Lone Mountain Allotment and other allotments within the Planning Area. In addition, the biological soil crust community would be monitored as one of the indicators for the S&Gs.

Alternative A

Biological soil crust data would continue to be collected within the Planning Area.

Alternative B

Use the data from biological soil crust monitoring to inform decisions concerning the maximization of natural values.

Alternative C

Use the data from biological soil crust monitoring to inform decisions concerning the protection or restoration of natural values.

Proposed RMP

Use the data from biological soil crust monitoring to inform decisions that balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health and accommodates cooperative management practices in areas containing biological soil crusts.

Alternative E

Use the data from biological soil crust monitoring to inform decisions concerning natural resources and additional commodity production in areas containing biological soil crusts.

2.4.3 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.5 Vegetation

2.5.1 Goal - Manage vegetation to achieve and maintain healthy watersheds.

2.5.1.1 Management Framework

With the passage of the FLPMA and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) of 1978, objectives and priorities for the management of public land vegetation resources were more clearly defined. Guidance contained in 43 CFR 4180 of the regulations directs public land management toward the maintenance or restoration of the physical function and biological health of vegetative ecosystems. The S&Gs approved by the Secretary of the Interior on August 12, 1997 also provide guidance for the management of plant communities. The S&Gs are included as Appendix G. This objective would maintain and improve the condition in plant communities that provide wildlife habitat, recreation, forage, scientific, scenic, ecological, and water and soil conservation benefits for consumptive and nonconsumptive uses. The long-term goal of vegetation management across the landscape is to maintain or improve rangeland condition to a DRC which meets management objectives.

Management actions authorized or implemented by the BLM would influence future vegetation composition. These actions may include: season, intensity, and duration of livestock grazing within diverse vegetation communities; the influence of fire and associated suppression actions; emergency fire rehabilitation and reintroduction of grazing following fire; the use of natural and management created firebreaks to protect early seral communities from frequent fire intervals; rehabilitation and reclamation actions following soil disturbing activities; management of noxious weeds; OHV and mechanized vehicle use; wild horse management; recreational use; and mining.

2.5.2 Riparian and Wetlands

2.5.2.1 Goal - Maintain, restore, or improve riparian vegetation, habitat diversity, and geomorphic stability to achieve healthy, productive riparian areas and wetlands and associated structure, function, process and products that provide public land values such as forage, water, cover, structure and security necessary to meet the life history requirements of fish and wildlife; public recreation and aesthetics; water quality and quantity; and livestock forage and water.

2.5.2.1.1 Management Framework

The FLPMA and PRIA direct the BLM to "... manage public lands according to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield" and "manage the public lands to prevent unnecessary degradation... so they become as productive as feasible." Section 102 of the FLPMA also requires that public land be managed for multiple use and sustained yield in a manner that would protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values. Section 102 also mandates that public land be managed in a manner that recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber. In addition to the FLPMA, numerous laws, regulations, policies, Executive Orders, and MOUs and memorandums of agreement (MOAs) direct the BLM to manage its riparian/wetland areas for biological diversity, and to maintain their productivity and sustainability for the benefit of the nation and its economy. These directives are listed in Appendix D. While the directives listed in Appendix D relate specifically to planning requirements, they also relate to management in general.

Functioning riparian/wetland areas are essential to maintenance and improvement of water quality and quantity, fish and wildlife habitat, and soil and alluvial groundwater retention. Healthy riparian/wetland areas increase the quantity and quality of forage for wildlife and livestock. Riparian zones serve as a primary indicator of watershed health. Management of riparian/wetland areas for the DRC would be implemented to maintain or progress toward attainment of PFC. This would be a first step toward achieving water resource and fish/wildlife habitat objectives in entire watersheds and/or their components such as uplands, streams, riparian/wetland areas, springs, lakes, and ponds.

Section 102.8 of the FLPMA states that it is the policy of the United States to manage the public land in a manner that would protect the quality of multiple resources and that would provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife and domestic animals. Beaver are considered to be an important part of the riparian habitat as discussed in "Riparian Area Management" TR 1737-5 (1990), TR 1737-6 (1992) and TR 1737-15 (1998). Habitat created behind beaver dams supports a diversity of aquatic organisms, fish, and wildlife including the Columbia spotted frog, a candidate species for listing as threatened or endangered. Although beaver are still present in some locations within the Planning Area, they have been removed or have emigrated from other locations. To allow for transplanting or reestablishment of beaver into suitable habitat where they were found previously, BLM Manual 1745, "Introduction, Transplant, Augmentation, and Reestablishment of Fish, Wildlife, and Plants" (1992) states that "Decisions for making introductions transplants, or reestablishments should be made as part of the land use planning process…." Recommendations for transplants of beaver onto or removal of beaver from public lands would be coordinated with the ODFW.

2.5.2.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Achieve or maintain a rating of PFC for perennial and intermittent flowing and standing waterbodies relative to site capability, site potential, and BLM management jurisdictions.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Management prescriptions would be implemented or continued at the activity plan level designed to maintain, restore, or improve specific attributes of riparian/wetland areas to maintain or progress toward attainment of PFC.

Objective 2. Maintain, restore, or improve riparian/wetland vegetation communities relative to ecological status, site potential and capability, or site specific management objectives, and transportation plans.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Assess reach/site scale riparian/wetland vegetation, hydrology, morphology, and soil characteristics (subsamples) to evaluate site potential and capability. To assist in riparian restoration and to preserve genetics, sources of localized riparian tree and shrub (cottonwood, willow) material would continue to be established and maintained.

Alternative A

Under this alternative, current management would be continued. Activity level management prescriptions or WQRP prescriptions would be developed and implemented based on reach/site assessment and site specific resource management objectives. Existing grazing and recreation systems and improvements that maintain PFC relative to reach capability and potential would continue. Existing roads associated with riparian areas would be maintained and additional roads developed on a case-by-case basis in conformance with existing laws and regulations.

Alternative B

Activity level management prescriptions or WQRP prescription(s), and propagation of local woody vegetation would be developed and implemented as in Alternative A, but would be generally guided by the stream/subwatershed priority list (Table 2.3.1) along with consideration of new circumstances and emerging opportunities. Recreational use, where occurring, would be managed in riparian/wetland areas emphasizing passive measures. Riparian/wetland areas would be managed to maintain or progress toward attainment of advanced ecological status. Restoration of riparian/wetland vegetation and adjacent upland vegetation that influences riparian vegetation communities would primarily rely on natural maintenance and recovery processes. In riparian areas determined through watershed level or site/reach specific assessment as unlikely to achieve or progress toward attainment of advanced ecological status within the RMP goal timeframe of 20 to 50 years, active restoration through planting native riparian vegetation may be initiated. Road networks would be inventoried; routes that affect riparian areas relative to site/reach specific objectives would be eliminated, relocated, or reconstructed. Natural recovery of abandoned roadbeds would be allowed where erosion potential is minimal and recovery potential is moderate to high. Active restoration of abandoned roadbeds would be pursued where erosion is likely and natural recovery potential is limited. Road crossings would be evaluated and modified, as necessary, to simulate natural stream function and process.

Alternative C

This alternative is similar to Alternative B. However, livestock and recreational use of riparian/wetland areas would be managed by active and/or passive measures, including BMPs, in both the CMPA and AMU. Active and/or passive

restoration may occur within riparian areas and adjacent uplands that influence riparian areas. Planting and other manipulation of riparian/wetland vegetation may occur to accelerate progress toward advanced ecological status. Riparian vegetation planting and/or manipulation may be protected through installation of temporary fence exclosures/cages. Condition of upland communities that influence riparian/wetland areas, such as increased fire frequency or intensity and/or erosion potential, may be actively restored with native and/or desirable nonnative vegetation and mechanical methods. Restoration sites would be managed to progress toward native vegetation communities within the RMP goal timeframe of 20 to 50 years.

Proposed RMP

This alternative is similar to Alternative C. However, ecological status objectives would be based on maintaining or progressing toward attainment of PFC; obligations pursuant to the CWA, ESA, and appropriate Executive Orders; and site specific objectives of multiple resource management. Activity level management prescriptions or WQRP prescription(s) would be developed and implemented as in Alternative A. Priority would generally be guided by the stream/watershed priority list (Table 2.3.1) along with consideration of new circumstances, emerging opportunities or cooperative management opportunities. Management would include passive and active measures relative to site specific emphasis of multiple resource management objective(s). Planting and other manipulation of riparian/wetland vegetation may occur to accelerate distribution and diversity of riparian vegetation. Riparian vegetation planting and/or manipulation may be protected through installation of temporary fence exclosures/cages. Restoration of adjacent upland vegetation communities that influence riparian/wetland areas would include establishment and management for a range of vegetation, native to desirable nonnative, relative to site specific emphasis of multiple resource management objective(s).

Alternative E

Activity level management prescriptions or WQRP prescription(s) would be developed and implemented as in Alternative A. Priority would generally be guided by the stream/watershed priority list (Table 2.3.1) along with consideration of new circumstances or cooperative management opportunities. Grazing and recreation management in riparian areas would provide maximum use while maintaining or progressing toward PFC, WQRP, or activity level plan objectives. Upland communities adjacent to riparian areas would be managed as in the Proposed RMP, with an emphasis on providing sustainable livestock forage, soil stability, and aesthetics along travel corridors and developed recreation sites. Riparian restoration would include passive and active measures to achieve activity level or WQRP objectives. This may include active planting and/or manipulation and temporary protection of riparian vegetation as discussed in the Proposed RMP and Alternative C. Roads in riparian areas would be managed and developed to promote commodity and public uses within established laws and regulations.

Objective 3. Manage riparian/wetland areas to maintain, restore, or improve soil moisture content and retention of alluvial ground water to augment base flow conditions during warm summer months.

Management Common to All Alternatives

BMPs would be prescribed and implemented at the activity plan level to maintain, restore, or improve floodplain function and process. The ODFW and the BLM would coordinate on the management of beaver populations on public lands.

Alternatives A and B

Beaver populations would be allowed to expand naturally on public lands as habitat conditions dictate.

Alternative C

Natural expansion and/or reintroduction of beaver would be allowed into suitable habitat on public lands.

Proposed RMP

Management under this alternative would be the same as Alternative C except that the BLM would recommend to the ODFW the removal of beaver from public lands if suitable habitat is not available or if economic harm or ecological damage is occurring.

Alternative E

Under this alternative, beaver populations would be allowed to expand naturally on public lands as habitat conditions dictate. The BLM would recommend to the ODFW the removal of beaver from public lands if suitable habitat is not available or economic harm or ecological damage is occurring.

2.5.2.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.5.3 Woodlands

2.5.3.1 Goal 1 - Maintain or improve ecological integrity of old growth juniper woodlands.

2.5.3.1.1 Management Framework

Western juniper is a long lived tree species capable of living 1,000 years or more. Historically, western juniper occupied rocky ridge tops, shallow soil areas, and other areas where surface vegetation was too sparse to carry fire. Old growth western juniper woodlands are best described on the basis of the presence of pre-European settlement trees (greater than 120 years before present [ybp]) and structural characteristics such as standing and down dead trees, decadent living trees, bole cavities, stripbark, and branches covered with lichens. These stands accounted for less than three percent of the western juniper woodlands across eastern Oregon. Old growth western juniper stands occupy less than one percent of the total Planning Area. The majority of western juniper expansion has primarily been on more productive plant communities; however, the number of trees in old growth stands has also increased over the last 120 years. While special characteristics of old growth woodlands provide habitat for plant and wildlife species, the recent dramatic increase in trees and invasive plants has increased the risk of unplanned wildland fire.

Fire was not a common occurrence in old growth western juniper woodlands. Historically, most fires were confined to small areas or single trees due to the sparse ground vegetation. Once every 100 to 200 years, climatic and vegetation conditions were such that large scale fires burned through these stands. These fires would kill some mature individuals and most of the younger trees. Recently, fire suppression, reduction of fine fuels by grazing, and subtle climatic shifts have allowed numerous small western juniper trees to become established. The increase in western juniper has been at the expense of the associated woody and herbaceous plants.

Western juniper woodlands are not classified as commercial forests. The bole morphology and numerous branches make juniper difficult to work with and desirable only for ornamental wood working. However, opportunities do exist for other nontraditional commercial uses such as firewood and biofuels.

2.5.3.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Maintain or improve late seral stage ecological characteristics in old growth western juniper woodlands.

Alternative A

Younger (less than 120 years old) western juniper trees would be cut from old growth juniper stands. Younger trees would be cut using chainsaws or other mechanical equipment. All lightning- and human-caused wildland fires in old growth western juniper stands would continue to be suppressed.

Alternative B

Natural processes would be allowed to define vegetation composition and structure in old growth woodlands. Wildland fire use management would occur on lightning-ignited fires that have low threat to life and property, and are determined to benefit resources in and adjacent to the fire.

Alternative C

If no threat to life or substantial resource values is present, wildland fires would be allowed to burn in old growth western juniper stands, restoring fire to its historic role in the ecosystem. Up to 90 percent of the post-European settlement western juniper trees may be individually removed from old growth stands using terra torches or other ignition devices.

Proposed RMP

Up to 90 percent of the younger (less than 120 years old) western juniper trees in old growth western juniper stands would be cut. The method of cutting would be determined based on project and site specific analysis. When appropriate, markets would be developed for byproducts of western juniper removal, such as secondary wood products (e.g. fence posts), biomass fuels for electricity generation, and firewood. Unplanned wildland fires occurring in old growth western juniper woodlands would be evaluated for resource benefits. If no threat to life or private property exists, the wildland fire would be managed for resource benefits.

Alternative E

Younger (less than 120 years old) western juniper trees would be mechanically cut from old growth juniper stands. Markets would be developed for byproducts of western juniper cutting, such as secondary wood products (e.g. fence posts), biomass fuels for electricity generation, and firewood. Unplanned wildland fires would be evaluated for resource benefit. If no threat to life or private property exists, the wildland fire would be managed for resource benefit.

2.5.3.2 Goal 2 - Maintain, restore, or improve the ecological integrity of mountain mahogany and quaking aspen stands/groves.

2.5.3.2.1 Management Framework

Quaking aspen and mountain mahogany communities comprise a relatively small percentage of the landscape, but contribute substantially to the biodiversity of plants and animals in the Great Basin. Quaking aspen plant communities, especially below 7,000 feet, were influenced by fire. These plant communities are often found in productive deep soil areas and in a complex mosaic of mountain big, mountain shrub, and low sagebrush plant communities. Quaking aspen plant communities occupy just over one percent of the total Planning Area. However, quaking aspen plant communities provide important habitat for many wildlife species.

Fire played a much less important role in the development of mountain mahogany stands. Mountain mahogany is often found on shallow soil sites in areas where long periods of time can elapse between fire events. Across the Planning Area mountain mahogany occupies sites similar to old growth western juniper. Mountain mahogany also has a very limited distribution, occupying less than one percent of the Planning Area. Little information is available about the ecology of mountain mahogany and the associated plant communities.

These two plant communities share a dramatic increase in western juniper over the last 120 years. Western juniper is an effective competitor for resources. Recent expansion of western juniper into quaking aspen and mountain mahogany stands has been at the expense of the associated vegetation. Western juniper has encroached some stands to the point that all associated woody vegetation has been replaced. This total type conversion alters the habitat for many plant and animal species. However, some areas encroached by western juniper still have varying degrees of quaking aspen or mountain mahogany remaining. Treatment of these stands, especially small isolated pockets, may require protection from wild and domestic larger herbivores until new suckers or plants can reach heights above the browse line.

2.5.3.2.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Reduce the component of western juniper and other associated woody plant species in quaking aspen and mountain mahogany stands.

Alternative A

Western juniper would continue to be mechanically removed from quaking aspen and mountain mahogany stands where fire is inappropriate. Where western juniper has become established and has the potential to dominate aspen stands, either the stands would be rehabilitated by prescribed burning, or the stand would be burned after removing the juniper. All nonprescription wildland fires in quaking aspen and mountain mahogany stands would continue to be suppressed.

Where recovery could be suppressed by browsing livestock and/or wildlife, treated mountain mahogany and quaking aspen stands would be fenced. In general, this pertains to smaller stands or to stands where higher than normal browsing pressure could be expected to occur. Some large stands might not need to be fenced in order for regeneration to occur.

Alternative B

Allow natural processes to define vegetation composition and structure in quaking aspen groves and mountain mahogany stands. Wildland fire use management would occur on lightning fires that have low threat to life and property, and that are determined to benefit resources in and adjacent to the fire.

Alternative C

Western juniper would be cut from quaking aspen and mountain mahogany stands. Where western juniper has become established and has the potential to dominate aspen stands, either the stands would be rehabilitated by prescribed burning, or the stand would be burned after removing the juniper. Wildland fires would be allowed to burn in quaking aspen and mountain mahogany stands that have been invaded by western juniper in order to reduce the influence of western juniper.

Where recovery could be suppressed by browsing livestock and/or wildlife, treated mountain mahogany and quaking aspen stands would be fenced. In general, this would pertain to smaller stands or to stands where higher than normal browsing pressure could be expected to occur. Some large stands might not need to be fenced in order for regeneration to occur.

Proposed RMP

Western juniper would be cut from quaking aspen and mountain mahogany stands where appropriate. Markets would be encouraged for byproducts of western juniper removal. Some targeted uses could be fence posts, molding, biomass for cogeneration, and firewood.

Where western juniper has become established and has the potential to dominate aspen stands, the stands would be rehabilitated by prescribed burning where possible. Naturally-ignited wildland fires in quaking aspen and mountain mahogany stands will be evaluated for resource benefits. Fires that do not threaten human life, areas of significant resource values, or private lands with no established written agreements will be managed for resource benefits.

Where recovery of quaking aspen or mountain mahogany could be suppressed by browsing livestock and/or wildlife, treated mountain mahogany and quaking aspen stands would be fenced. In general, this would pertain to smaller stands or to stands where higher than normal browsing pressure could be expected to occur outside of the wilderness boundary. Some large stands might not need to be fenced in order for regeneration to occur.

Alternative E

Western juniper would be mechanically removed from quaking aspen and mountain mahogany stands. Markets would be encouraged to utilize the byproducts of western juniper removal. For example, markets for fence posts, biomass for cogeneration, and firewood could be encouraged in the local community.

Where western juniper has become established and has the potential to dominate quaking aspen stands, prescribed fire would be used to reduce the influence of western juniper, or the stand would be mechanically treated and then burned to achieve the same goal. Burned areas would be reseeded with native and introduced forage species.

Wild and domestic herbivores would be allowed access to additional forage produced by cutting and/or burning mountain mahogany and quaking aspen stands.

2.5.3.3 Goal 3 - Manage woodland habitat so that the forage, water, cover, structure, and security necessary to meet the life history requirements of woodland dependent and woodland associated wildlife species are available on public lands.

2.5.3.3.1 Management Framework

Over 90 percent of the current western juniper woodlands established since the 1870s. The prehistoric record indicates that the range of western juniper woodlands has fluctuated greatly over the last 5,000 years. Historically, western juniper increased its range during mild, wet periods. As fire frequency increased at the end of these periods, the range of western juniper contracted. Recent expansions have occurred under different climatic conditions and in more productive and deeper soil sites than the previous expansions.

Western juniper is an effective competitor for resources. Recent expansion of western juniper into more productive big sagebrush, low sagebrush, and riparian plant communities has been at the expense of the associated vegetation and animal communities. The result of this encroachment has been a reduction in the total number of species present and an increase in the amount of mineral soil exposed. Forage for livestock and wildlife has also been reduced as western juniper density and cover has increased. Sagebrush obligate wildlife species have experienced a reduction in habitat due to western juniper encroachment. A similar trend has occurred in riparian plant communities where western juniper has replaced riparian woody and herbaceous plants.

2.5.3.3.2 Management Directions by Alternative

Objective. Reduce the influence of post settlement (stands with trees less than 120 years old) western juniper to restore riparian and sagebrush habitats.

Alternative A

Post settlement juniper trees (less than 120 years old) would be cut from riparian areas and sagebrush habitats. Human-ignited prescribed broadcast fire would be used to reduce the influence of western juniper on sagebrush and riparian habitats. All unplanned wildland fires would be suppressed with the appropriate management actions.

Alternative B

Naturally-ignited fires would be evaluated for risk to public and firefighter safety, threats to private property, and resource damage. Fires with low risks to firefighter and public safety, private property, and resources would be managed for resource benefits. Prescribed fires would be used to reduce the influence of western juniper on sagebrush and riparian plant communities.

Alternative C

All younger western juniper trees (less than 120 years old) would be cut from riparian areas and sagebrush habitats. Naturally ignited fires would be evaluated for risk to public and firefighter safety, threats to private property, and resource damage. Fires with low risks to firefighter and public safety, private property, and resources would be managed for resource benefits.

Proposed RMP

Post settlement trees (less than 120 years old) would be cut in riparian areas and sagebrush plant communities. Naturally-ignited fires would be evaluated for risk to public and firefighter safety, threats to private property with no written agreements, and significant resource values. Fires that do not threaten human life, private land without written agreements, and other resource values would be managed for resource benefits when appropriate. Additional considerations for suppression action would be the number of fires burning on the Burns Interagency Fire Zone, sub-geographic area, state, and nation. At certain times, the number of concurrent fires may be large enough that suppression action is required because few firefighting resources are available. Human-ignited prescribed fires would be used to reduce the influence of western juniper on sagebrush and riparian plant communities. Application of fire will occur after site specific analysis.

Alternative E

Post settlement trees (less than 120 years old) would be cut from riparian areas and sagebrush plant communities. Naturally ignited fires would be evaluated for risk to public and firefighter safety, threats to private property, and resource damage. Fires with low risks to firefighter and public safety, private property, and resources would be managed for resource benefits. Human-ignited prescribed fires would be used to reduce the influence of western juniper on sagebrush and riparian plant communities. Local markets would be encouraged to utilize byproducts of western juniper removal.

2.5.4 Wildlands Juniper Management Area

2.5.4.1 Goal - Manage the WJMA for the purposes of experimentation, education, interpretation, and demonstration of active and passive management intended to restore the historic fire regime and pre-settlement native vegetation communities on Steens Mountain, compatibly with preservation of desirable juniper woodland ecological values in nonexperimental areas.

2.5.4.1.1 Management Framework

The restoration of historic fire regimes in the CMPA is specified in the Steens Act and discussed elsewhere under Fire Management. The WJMA was established by the Steens Act in order to provide an opportunity to demonstrate current management actions and evaluate the applicability of new or untested management techniques. In order to make the WJMA most useful, plant and animal communities should be inventoried in order to provide generalized baseline information and to assist in planning demonstration areas and field experiments.

Common to all objectives is the establishment of a science advisory group, which will help set direction for research and demonstration conducted within the WJMA. A science advisory council may be appointed by the Secretary at the request of the Designated Federal Official or the SMAC. This would be a team of respected, knowledgeable, and diverse scientists to provide advice on questions relating to the management of the CMPA.

2.5.4.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Establish a series of demonstration areas within the 3,267-acre WJMA for technology transfer and public education. Evaluate different treatments and management strategies for plant communities dominated by western juniper.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Temporary fences would be constructed to protect demonstration areas within the WJMA where livestock grazing is outside the scope of the evaluation. Every effort would be made to mitigate any loss of forage resource to the permittee. Naturally-ignited fires that occur within the boundary of the WJMA or threaten the boundary will be suppressed to protect long-term activities.

Alternative A

Livestock grazing would continue in the Frazier Field Pasture.

Plant and animal communities present in the WJMA would be inventoried.

Alternative B

There would be no livestock grazing in the Frazier Field Pasture.

Plant and animal communities present in the WJMA would be inventoried. Areas would be established to demonstrate and evaluate the effects of different treatments (fire, cutting, or other strategies) on western juniper and on the recovery or rehabilitation of native plant communities. Interpretive sites would be established at the boundary of the WJMA identifying the management area, its intent, and eventually some experimental results.

Proposed RMP and Alternatives C, and E

Livestock grazing would continue in the Frazier Field Pasture.

Plant and animal communities present in the WJMA would be inventoried. Areas would be established to demonstrate and evaluate the effects of different treatments (fire, cutting, or other strategies) on western juniper and on the recovery or rehabilitation of native plant communities. Interpretive sites would be established at the boundary of the WJMA identifying the management area, its intent, and eventually some experimental results.

2.5.4.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.5.5 Rangelands

2.5.5.1 Goal 1 - Maintain, restore or improve the integrity of desirable vegetation communities including perennial, native, and desirable introduced plant species. Provide for their continued existence and normal function in nutrient, water, and energy cycles.

2.5.5.1.1 Management Framework

Beginning in the 1960s, awareness began to evolve concerning the importance of public lands for the maintenance of biological diversity. The passage of the FLPMA and PRIA provided objectives and priorities for the management of vegetation resources on public lands. Across the landscape, the long-term goal of vegetation management is to improve or maintain rangeland condition to the DRC that meets management objectives.

2.5.5.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Maintain or restore native vegetation communities through sound landscape management practices.

Proposed RMP and Alternative A

Maintain or improve ecological status of native plant communities.

Alternative B

Natural processes would define the vegetation composition across the landscape.

Alternative C

Natural values associated with the diverse composition and structure of native vegetation would be emphasized. Emphasis on commodity production of herbaceous and shrubby vegetation would be minimized.

Alternative E

The production of native herbaceous and shrubby vegetation for commodity uses would be emphasized within the constraints of other resource management objectives.

Objective 2. Manage desirable nonnative seedings to meet resource objectives.

Alternative A

Nonnative seedings (dominated by species such as crested wheatgrass) would be managed or manipulated to maintain vegetation composition and to meet S&Gs. In Greater sage-grouse habitat or deer winter range or both, native vegetation and diversity would be maintained or restored through interseeding of native plant species on approximately 200 acres of nonnative seedings. Brushbeating or disking in a mosaic pattern would be allowed on 50 percent of nonnative seedings where brush cover is high.

Alternative B

Natural processes would define the vegetation composition in nonnative seedings.

Alternative C

Actions to diversify structure and composition of selected nonnative seedings would be implemented, with emphasis on natural values and other resource objectives, such as reestablishment of native plant species. In Greater sage-grouse habitat or deer winter range or both, interseeding, preferably with locally obtained seed, to establish native plant species on approximately 20,000 acres of nonnative seedings throughout the Planning Area would be utilized where vegetative species diversity is low. Low species diversity means seeded areas that are predominantly crested wheatgrass, or that have reverted to cheatgrass dominance, or few herbaceous plants with an overstory of sagebrush. The emphasis would be on reestablishing native species, but desirable nonnative species could be used in the seeding mix where appropriate. Livestock grazing could be used to suppress plant competition and allow sagebrush establishment. In areas to be

reseeded, coordination with permittees, the ODFW, and the USFWS would occur to set livestock grazing prescriptions on a site specific basis. Emphasis of this project would be the seedings on the north and west sides of Steens Mountain. Brushbeating of sagebrush in a mosaic pattern would be allowed on 50 percent of seeded areas where brush cover is high.

Proposed RMP

Actions to diversify structure and composition of selected nonnative seedings would be implemented when consistent with other resource objectives. In Greater sage-grouse habitat or deer winter range or both, interseeding, preferably using locally obtained seed, to establish native plant species onto approximately 10,000 acres of nonnative seedings throughout the Planning Area would be utilized where vegetative species diversity is low. Low species diversity means seeded areas that are predominantly crested wheatgrass, or that have reverted to cheatgrass dominance, or few herbaceous plants with an overstory of sagebrush. Other desirable nonnative species could be used in the seeding mix. Livestock grazing could be used to suppress competition and allow sagebrush establishment. In areas to be reseeded, coordination with permitees, the ODFW, and the USFWS would occur to set livestock grazing prescriptions on a site specific basis. Emphasis of this project would be the seedings on the north and west sides of Steens Mountain. Brushbeating of sagebrush in a mosaic pattern would be allowed on 50 percent of seeded areas where brush cover is high.

Alternative E

Existing nonnative seedings presently in poor or fair condition would be restored. New seeding in areas capable of additional biomass production would be established. In Greater sage-grouse habitat or deer winter range or both, interseeding to establish native and other desirable nonnative plant species onto approximately 5,000 acres of nonnative seedings throughout the Planning Area would be utilized where vegetative species diversity is low. Low species diversity means seeded areas that are predominantly crested wheatgrass, or that have reverted to cheatgrass dominance, or few herbaceous plants with an overstory of sagebrush. Livestock grazing would be used to suppress competition and allow sagebrush establishment. In areas to be reseeded, coordination with permittees, the ODFW, and the USFWS would occur to set livestock grazing prescriptions on a site-specific basis. Emphasis of this project would be the seedings on the north and west side of Steens Mountain. Brush beating of sagebrush in a mosaic pattern would be allowed on 75 percent of seeded areas where brush cover is high.

Objective 3. Rehabilitate plant communities that do not have the potential to meet the DRC through management.

Alternative A

Vegetation manipulation projects would be implemented under this alternative, consistent with existing management objectives. Areas burned by wildland fire would be rehabilitated to protect soil, water, and vegetation resources.

Alternative B

Under this alternative, natural processes would determine vegetation composition. Wildland fire areas would not be rehabilitated unless noxious weeds or other undesirable weedy plant species have the potential to dominate the site.

Alternative C

Plant communities that do not meet the DRC due to dominance by undesirable weedy species or invasive juniper would be rehabilitated utilizing native plant species.

Proposed RMP

Plant communities that do not meet the DRC due to dominance by undesirable weedy species or invasive juniper would be rehabilitated utilizing native and nonnative plant species where appropriate.

Alternative E

Plant communities that do not meet the DRC due to dominance by undesirable weedy species or invasive juniper would be rehabilitated utilizing species that would provide optimal forage and vegetative cover.

Objective 4 - Increase species and structural diversity at the plant community and landscape levels in the big sagebrush communities. Provide multiple successional stages within the landscape.

Alternative A

Prescribed fire and mechanical removal of western juniper would be used to create a mosaic of multiple successional stages, reduce the dominance of woody vegetation, and release suppressed desirable plant species.

Alternative B

Wildland fire would be utilized to create a mosaic of multiple successional stages, reduce the dominance of woody vegetation, and release suppressed desirable plant species.

Alternative C

Wildland fire and mechanical removal of western juniper would be utilized on selected sites to create a mosaic of multiple successional stages, reduce the dominance of woody vegetation, and release suppressed desirable plant species.

Proposed RMP and Alternative E

Prescribed fire, and all wildland fire, and mechanical removal of western juniper would be utilized to create a mosaic of multiple successional stages, reduce the dominance of woody vegetation, and release suppressed desirable plant species.

2.5.5.2 Goal 2 - Manage rangeland habitats so that forage, water, cover, structure, and security necessary to meet the life history requirements of wildlife are available on public lands.

2.5.5.2.1 Management Framework

With the passage of the FLPMA and PRIA, objectives and priorities for the management of public land vegetation resources were more clearly defined. Guidance contained in 43 CFR 4180 of the regulations directs public land management toward the maintenance or restoration of the physical function and biological health of vegetative ecosystems. The S&Gs (USDI 1997a) also provide guidance for the management of plant communities with relation to rangeland condition. This goal would maintain and improve the condition in plant communities that provide wildlife habitat, recreation, forage, scientific, scenic, ecological, and water and soil conservation benefits for consumptive and nonconsumptive uses. The long-term goal of vegetation management across the landscape is to maintain or improve rangeland condition to the DRC, which meets management objectives. Numerous wildlife species (e.g. Greater sage-grouse, mule deer, pygmy rabbits, sage sparrows, sage thrasher, other migratory birds and small mammals) depend on native upland sagebrush steppe habitats to meet life history needs. In managing uplands, the BLM needs to consider the consequences and relationships of management to the life history needs of wildlife.

2.5.5.2.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Manage big sagebrush, quaking aspen, and western juniper plant communities to meet habitat requirements for wildlife.

Alternative A

Variable desired conditions of big sagebrush cover would be determined on a site-by-site basis to benefit game and nongame species.

Alternative B

Natural processes would be allowed to determine the future condition of wildlife habitat in big sagebrush, quaking aspen, and western juniper plant communities.

Alternative C

Big sagebrush, quaking aspen, and western juniper plant communities would be managed for the benefit of all wildlife and to meet the DRC in all habitats throughout the Planning Area.

Proposed RMP

Big sagebrush, quaking aspen, and western juniper plant communities would be managed for the benefit of all wildlife and to meet the DRC in most habitats throughout the Planning Area.

Alternative E

Big sagebrush, quaking aspen, and western juniper habitat types would be managed where economically important wildlife are present. Big sagebrush would be reestablished where economically important game species are present.

Objective 2. Manage big sagebrush communities to meet the life history requirements of sagebrush dependent species.

Alternative A

Variable desired conditions of big sagebrush cover would be determined on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with the ODFW to provide mosaics of sagebrush cover on portions of big game habitat. Limited emphasis would be placed on specifically providing habitat for nongame wildlife species. Crucial big game and Greater sage-grouse habitat would be protected from large scale vegetation treatment projects or wildland fires.

Alternative B

Future big sagebrush conditions would be variable and would be determined by natural processes.

Alternative C

Big sagebrush habitat would be managed for shrub cover, structure, and forage values for the benefit of game and nongame wildlife. The DRC would include shrub cover values that meet or exceed the requirements described in Wildlife Habitats in Managed Rangelands (1984) and big sagebrush distribution over a large enough area to avoid the adverse impacts of habitat fragmentation. The DRC would strive for big sagebrush overstories that emphasize the presence of mature, light- to moderately-stocked shrub canopies capable of supporting diverse herbaceous understories and that are present in a variety of spatial arrangements important to wildlife. This would apply to all native range or seeded areas in big sagebrush habitats throughout the Planning Area.

Proposed RMP

Same as Alternative C, except that the DRC would apply to most areas in big sagebrush habitat throughout the Planning Area.

Alternative E

Big sagebrush habitat would be reestablished on native rangelands or seedings where economically important wildlife are present.

2.5.5.3 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.5.6 Noxious Weeds

2.5.6.1 Goal - Control the introduction and proliferation of noxious weeds and reduce the extent and density of established populations to acceptable levels.

2.5.6.1.1 Management Framework

The FLPMA and PRIA direct the BLM to "manage public lands according to the principles of multiple-use and sustained yield" and to "manage the public lands to prevent unnecessary degradation…so they become as productive as feasible." The introduction and spread of noxious weeds and undesirable plants within the Planning Area contributes to the loss of rangeland productivity, increased soil erosion, reduced species and structural diversity, loss of wildlife habitat, and in some instances may pose a threat to human health and welfare. The Carlson-Foley Act (Public Law [PL] 90-583), the Federal Noxious Weed Act (PL 93-629), and the Burns District's Integrated Management Program EA direct noxious

weed inventory and control on public lands in the Planning Area. In the future, additional weed management direction will come from the new national Vegetation Management EIS, which is currently being developed. Protection of natural resource values depends on educating people about the negative impacts of weeds, and the actions, which agencies and individuals can take to prevent introduction and establishment of invasive species.

The Burns District Noxious Weed Management Program addresses the dynamic nature of noxious weeds such as the increasing number of species, changing conditions of infestations, and changing technologies. Currently, 18 noxious weed species are known to occur within the AMU, infesting 1,457 acres. There are currently 17 noxious weed species known to occur within the CMPA, infesting 336 acres. Selection of the appropriate control method is based on such factors as the growth characteristics of the target species, size and location of infestation, accessibility/feasibility of equipment, potential impacts to nontarget species, human use of the area, effectiveness of the treatment on target species, and cost. In addition, all BLM authorized activities are evaluated for their potential to spread or cause new infestations. If necessary, proposed activities shall be mitigated so that weed establishment would be minimal.

Depending on the plant's characteristics, control methods may be used individually or in combination and may be utilized over several years. Control treatments may include cultural, mechanical, chemical, or biological methods. Due to the length of seed viability, annual germination of seed from previous years, and the characteristics of certain plants, treatment could occur annually for a period of ten or more years. Since weed infestations vary annually due to new introductions, spread of existing infestations, and results of prior treatments, annual site specific reviews of known locations would be conducted prior to initiating weed treatment activities.

Herbicides that may be used are those approved in the "Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States EIS" (1991b), or any that are approved through an amendment or other agency approval process (see Appendix H for the current list of approved chemicals). Application would take place only in accordance with the manufacturer's label and by qualified/certified applicators. Methods of application include wiping or wicking, backpack spraying, spraying from a vehicle with a handgun or boom, aerial spraying, or other approved methods.

Noxious weeds occurring in special management areas, including areas with T&E species/habitat, would be treated with methods to protect resource values and in accordance with the provisions of the Burns District's Integrated Management Program EA directing weed management.

2.5.6.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Treat noxious weeds and inventory for new infestations using the most effective means available, as outlined in the Burns District's Integrated Management Program EA/Decision Record.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Noxious weed prevention and control would continue to be a priority in all Alternatives. Weeds would be controlled in an integrated weed management program, which includes prevention, education, and cultural, physical, biological, and chemical treatments. Preventive measures such as public education and livestock and wildlife management would be employed to maintain or promote desirable vegetation cover and reduce the distribution and introduction of noxious weed seed and plant parts. Mechanical and manual control methods and burning treatments would physically remove noxious weeds and unwanted or invasive vegetation; biological controls would introduce and cultivate factors such as insects and pathogens that naturally limit the spread of noxious weeds; and chemical treatments using approved herbicides would be applied where mechanical or biological controls are not feasible. Periodic inventories would detect new infestations. Monitoring the extent of known infestations is the key to controlling or eradicating noxious weeds.

Alternative A

The application of approved noxious weed control methods including mechanical, biological, and chemical treatments would be continued through integrated management. Control on disturbed areas such as roads, ROWs, waterholes, and recreational sites would be emphasized, as would inventories to detect new infestations.

Alternatives B and C

Only high priority areas of noxious weeds would be treated in order to protect high quality natural resource values and adjacent private land. Manual or biological control methods would be preferred. Inventories for noxious weeds would increase to provide maximum detection of new infestations.

Proposed RMP and Alternative E

Integrated management would be implemented for the control of noxious weeds. Control on disturbed areas such as roads, ROWs, waterholes, and recreational sites would be emphasized. Priority would be given to lands with high quality natural resource values. Emphasis would be on prevention, restoration, research, and expanded efforts to inventory and detect new infestations.

Objective 2. Create public awareness on how to utilize public lands without inadvertently spreading noxious weeds.

Alternative A

Public education concerning noxious weeds would continue in the local area.

Proposed RMP and Alternatives B, C, and E

Public education concerning noxious weeds would be expanded to include areas outside of Harney County.

Objective 3. Maintain partnerships with local groups and government agencies to combine efforts in the control and prevention of noxious weed infestations.

Management Common to All Alternatives

The Harney County Weed Management partnership would continue under all of the alternatives.

2.5.6.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.6 Fish and Wildlife

2.6.1 Goal – Provide diverse, structured, resilient, and connected habitat on a landscape level to support viable and sustainable populations of wildlife, fish, and other aquatic organisms.

2.6.1.1 Management Framework

Section 102.8 of the FLPMA states that the policy of the United States is to manage public land in a manner that would protect the quality of multiple resources and provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals. The PRIA directs the BLM to improve rangeland conditions with due consideration given the needs of wildlife and their habitats.

The character of vegetation, including arrangements, densities, and age classes, greatly influences fish and wildlife habitat quality and productivity. Since vegetation character can vary in response to federal land use authorizations, the BLM considers the consequences to the health of fish and wildlife habitat of various land uses such as grazing and mining, and treatments such as burning and seeding.

The BLM's role in the management of fish and other aquatic resources is to provide the habitat that supports these resources. Aquatic habitat values are products of the attributes and processes of properly functioning riparian and aquatic systems at a desired ecological status. Therefore, the maintenance, restoration, or improvement of aquatic habitat to support these resources is primarily relative to the alternatives identified under the Water Resources, Vegetation, and Special Status Species sections. Species manipulation, such as introduction or removal, is under the authority of the ODFW and the USFWS.

Wildlife must have a reasonable amount of protection from adverse impacts associated with human disturbances and most human activities. This is especially true during breeding seasons and when wildlife use winter ranges.

The ODFW manages wildlife species populations through management objectives specified in their respective management plans; the BLM manages adequate habitat to support these numbers. The BLM and the ODFW will work cooperatively to benefit the management of wildlife and wildlife habitat as described in the MOU of 2001 between the two agencies. Bighorn sheep have been reintroduced and elk have expanded their range in the Planning Area, while pronghorn numbers have remained fairly stable and deer numbers have decreased. Changes in numbers of wildlife depend on availability, quality and quantity of seasonal and year long habitat, and other factors.

To allow for transplanting or reestablishment of wildlife into suitable habitat where they were found previously, BLM Manual 1745, "Introduction, Transplant, Augmentation, and Reestablishment of Fish, Wildlife, and Plants" (1992) states that "Decisions for making introductions, transplants, or reestablishments should be made as part of the land use planning process...." Recommendations for transplants of wildlife onto or removal from public lands would be coordinated with the ODFW.

2.6.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Maintain, restore, or improve habitat.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Maintenance, restoration, or improvement of habitat to support these resources is primarily relative to the alternatives identified under the Water Resources, Vegetation, and Special Status Species sections. Fish and wildlife habitat management and monitoring would be coordinated with the ODFW, DEQ, USFWS, and other cooperators, as appropriate.

Management of wildlife species and habitat in the Steens Mountain Wilderness will be conducted in accordance with the Steens Act, the Wilderness Act and Appendix B of House Report 101-405 of the 101st Congress. MDRG analysis will be conducted on all actions.

Alternative A

Single species oriented management would be emphasized in most habitats.

Approximately 9,000 acres of deer winter range in unsatisfactory condition would be reseeded with sagebrush and a mix of other native and nonnative species in coordination with the USFWS, ODFW, and permittees. Opportunities for improvements or restoration of fish and wildlife habitat would be identified and undertaken, such as vegetation manipulation and water developments.

Alternative B

This alternative assumes that habitat conditions would be determined by the consequences of natural events. The emphasis would be on managing self-sustaining native species.

Where appropriate, at least 9,000 acres of deer winter range would be reseeded by aerial application. Opportunities would be identified and undertaken for improvements or restoration of fish and wildlife habitat through the use of wildland fire, fence removal, and other mainly passive methods.

Alternative C

Equal emphasis would be placed on habitat requirements for game and nongame fish and wildlife. To the extent possible and practical, fish and wildlife community connectivity and interrelationships would be emphasized in most habitats. This approach would stress landscape or ecosystem management and would be distinctly different from single species management emphasis.

The emphasis would be on managing self-sustaining native species.

Throughout the Planning Area, approximately 20,000 acres of nonnative seedings and all the native vegetation in deer winter range where vegetative species diversity is low would be interseeded to establish native plant species. Other desirable nonnative plant species may be used on a limited basis. Low species diversity means seeded areas that are predominantly crested wheatgrass, or that have cheatgrass dominance, or few herbaceous plants with an overstory of sagebrush. Livestock grazing could be used to suppress competition and allow sagebrush establishment. In areas to be reseeded, coordination with permittees, the ODFW, and the USFWS would occur to set livestock grazing prescriptions on a site specific basis.

Opportunities for improvements or restoration of wildlife habitat through the use of wildland fire, other vegetation manipulations, limited fence removal, water developments, etc., would be identified and undertaken.

Proposed RMP

Equal emphasis would be placed on habitat requirements for game and nongame fish and wildlife. To the extent possible and practical, fish and wildlife community connectivity and interrelationships would be emphasized in most habitats. This approach would stress landscape or ecosystem management and be distinctly different from single species management emphasis.

Throughout the Planning Area, approximately 10,000 acres of nonnative seedings and most of the native vegetation in deer winter range where vegetative species diversity is low would be interseeded to establish native plant species. Where appropriate, other desirable nonnative plant species could be used. Low species diversity means seeded areas that are predominantly crested wheatgrass, or that have cheatgrass dominance, or few herbaceous plants with an overstory of sagebrush. Livestock grazing could be used to suppress competition and allow sagebrush establishment. In areas to be reseeded, coordination with permittees, the ODFW, and the USFWS would occur to set livestock grazing prescriptions on a site specific basis.

Opportunities would be identified and undertaken for improvements or restoration of fish and wildlife habitat through the use of wildland fire, other vegetation manipulations, water developments, etc. Functional fence removal would not be conducted due to livestock grazing.

Alternative E

Single species oriented management would be emphasized in most habitats.

Throughout the Planning Area, approximately 5,000 acres of nonnative seedings and some of the native vegetation in deer winter range where vegetative species diversity is low would be interseeded to establish native and other desirable nonnative plant species. Low species diversity means seeded areas that are predominantly crested wheatgrass, or that have cheatgrass dominance, or few herbaceous plants with an overstory of sagebrush. Livestock grazing would be used to suppress competition and allow sagebrush establishment. In areas to be reseeded, coordination with permittees, the ODFW, and USFWS would occur to set livestock grazing prescriptions on a site specific basis. Opportunities would be identified for improvements or restoration of fish and wildlife habitat through the use of wildland fire, other vegetation manipulations and water developments. Fence removal would not be conducted due to livestock grazing.

The emphasis of the improvements would be to benefit livestock.

Objective 2. Manage forage production to support wildlife population levels identified by the ODFW.

Alternative A

Forage for wildlife would be allocated at management objective levels; wildlife populations would be allowed to expand naturally or through limited transplants in coordination with the ODFW.

Alternative B

Forage for wildlife would be allocated at greater than management objective levels. Wildlife populations would be allowed to expand naturally.

Alternative C

Forage for wildlife would be allocated at greater than management objective level. Wildlife populations would be allowed to expand naturally or through limited transplants in coordination with the ODFW.

Proposed RMP

Forage for wildlife would be allocated at management objective levels. Wildlife populations would be allowed to expand naturally or through limited transplants in coordination with the ODFW.

Alternative E

Forage for wildlife would be allocated at management objective levels. Wildlife populations would be allowed to expand naturally or through limited transplants. Forage allocation would increase concurrent with improved range conditions and other improvements in coordination with the ODFW.

2.6.2 Monitoring.

See Appendix Q.

2.7 Special Status Species

2.7.1 Goal - Maintain, restore, or improve special status plant populations and animal habitats; manage public lands to conserve or contribute to the recovery of threatened or endangered species; and prevent future Endangered Species Act listings.

2.7.1.1 Management Framework

The ESA mandates management that leads to the conservation or recovery of federally listed T&E species. This Act, as well as BLM policy, encourages management to conserve special status species not currently listed as threatened or endangered.

Section 102.8 of the FLPMA requires that public lands be managed to protect the quality of ecological and environmental values, and where appropriate, to protect their natural condition. The FLPMA further requires that public land be managed to protect the quality of multiple resources and provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals. Rangeland health regulations identify the need to foster productive and diverse populations and communities of plants and animals.

Most plants and animals assigned to a special status category are limited in their distributions, populations, or habitats and may be at risk over various geographic areas. Where evidence suggests that land uses are adversely affecting special status species not currently listed as threatened or endangered, it is in the public interest to prevent the need for federal listing under the ESA. Listing of a species as threatened or endangered may lead to restrictions on land uses, and under some circumstances may cause adverse socioeconomic impacts to commodity users. In most cases, both socioeconomic and biological benefits are associated with conserving species to avoid federal listing.

Conservation efforts for special status species may include maintenance, restoration, or improvement of habitat through resource management actions relative to the habitat needs or specific circumstances of a species. Both active and passive measures may be developed and implemented to promote suitable habitat condition and to minimize or avoid adverse effects to the species. Two potential limitations to developing and implementing conservation efforts are: 1) the lag between management implementation and the realization of environmental benefits and 2) the fact that physical and biological mechanisms adversely affecting a species are not necessarily fully understood.

Bats are an economically important group due to their impact on insect populations. Many of the bat species present in the Planning Area are special status species. Abandoned mines can be important roosting habitats for bats, but are also subject to disturbance by humans. Gating of mine entrances can protect important bat habitat as well as reduce the possibility of injury to people exploring these old mines.

Numerous wildlife species depend on native upland sagebrush steppe habitats to meet life history needs. In managing uplands, the BLM needs to consider the consequences and relationships of management to the life history needs of wildlife. The Executive Order on the Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds, and the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines give direction to protect or restore habitat for these species, many of which are special status species.

Public land supplies a high percentage of the total available and currently unoccupied land suitable for bighorn sheep. As the principle land administrator of habitat capable of supporting bighorn sheep, BLM involvement in this program is necessary. The BLM has a policy and responsibility to cooperate with state agencies to accommodate species management goals to the extent they are consistent with the principles of multiple use management.

Although the ODFW and USFWS retain jurisdiction over special status species populations, the BLM, ODFW and the USFWS cooperatively manage special status species populations and habitats through recovery plans, conservation agreements, and management objectives specified in their respective management plans. The BLM is involved in the development of these plans and manages habitat in cooperation with the other agencies in support of these plans. The BLM and the ODFW will work cooperatively to benefit the management of special status animal species and their habitat as described in the MOU of 2001 between the two agencies. Management of special status species and their habitat in wilderness areas will be conducted in accordance with the Steens Act, the Wilderness Act and Appendix B of House Report 101-405 of the 101st Congress. Minimum Requirement Decision Guide (MRDG) analysis is required and would be conducted on all actions proposed for management of special status species and their associated habitats.

To allow for transplanting or reestablishment of special status species into suitable habitat where they were found previously, BLM Manual 1745, "Introduction, Transplant, Augmentation, and Reestablishment of Fish, Wildlife, and Plants" (1992) states that "Decisions for making introductions transplants, or reestablishments should be made as part of the land use planning process…." Recommendations for transplants of special status species onto or removal from public lands would be coordinated with the ODFW and the USFWS.

The ODFW has been pursuing a statewide effort to restore bighorn sheep into suitable unoccupied habitat and to increase populations in currently occupied areas. Both the BLM and the ODFW have agency management plans and have coordinated over the years to foster communication between agencies and the public. Although the ODFW has been successfully releasing and managing bighorn sheep on public land since the mid-1960s, current populations and distributions are still considered to be below their potential.

Bighorn sheep are native to eastern Oregon. Their presence contributes to the overall biological diversity and productivity of public land. Public interest in observing bighorn sheep in their natural setting is widespread, and they are highly prized as a big game animal.

2.7.2 Special Status Plant Species

2.7.2.1 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Manage special status plant species and their habitats so management actions do not contribute to their decline or listing as T&E.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Known populations of special status plants would be monitored periodically to assess their condition and trend. Inventories for new occurrences of special status plants would be completed in areas where public land is disturbed or targeted for disposal. Federal regulations, state laws, and BLM policy mandates the following actions:

- Maintain and improve critical or essential habitat to prevent deterioration and provide recovery for federally listed plant species.
- Maintain, restore, or increase the habitat of candidate, state-listed, and other sensitive plant species to maintain the populations at a level which will avoid endangering the species and the need to list the species by either state or Federal governments.
- Manage so that BLM authorized actions do not result in the need to list special status plant species or jeopardize the continued existence of listed species.
- Increase BLM's knowledge about the status and distribution of special status plant species.

Alternative A

Populations of special status plant species and their habitats are managed so that BLM actions do not contribute to the need to list them as federally threatened or endangered. Conservation agreements are written and implemented for selected species at highest risk. Monitoring and inventory data are collected for selected special status plant species to assess the potential threats to habitat or individual populations.

Alternative B

Natural processes would determine future conditions except for management specified in recovery plans developed for T&E plant species.

Proposed RMP and Alternative C

Special status plant species would be intensively managed to maintain or restore habitats or populations where needed. Conservation Agreements and management plans would be completed for species considered to be at the highest risk for listing. The BLM would participate in the development of recovery plans for listed species if requested by the USFWS. Monitoring and inventory data would be collected for all special status plant species to assess the potential threats to habitat or individual populations.

Alternative E

Special status plant species would be managed so that BLM actions would not contribute to the need to list them as threatened or endangered. Management would consist of providing habitat conditions that meet individual species requirements.

2.7.2.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.7.3 Special Status Animal Species

2.7.3.1 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 2. Conserve special status animal species and the ecosystems on which they depend.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Maintenance, restoration, or improvement of habitat to support these resources is primarily relative to the alternatives identified under Water Resources and Vegetation. Fish and wildlife habitat management and monitoring would be coordinated with the ODFW, DEQ, USFWS, and other cooperators, as appropriate.

The BLM would not undertake management activities that are likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or adversely modify critical habitat pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the ESA.

Alternative A

Management would emphasize achieving the DRC that maintains, restores, or improves habitats or populations of any special status species regardless of economic importance. The habitats and populations of all special status species would be managed for conservation. Management actions that affect threatened or endangered species would be conducted in accordance with existing and future biological opinions.

Management would provide habitat conditions that meet individual species requirements. Fish and wildlife community goals would generally be secondary to goals for individual species.

A variety of management actions or land use adjustments could be required to maintain, restore, or improve habitat for special status species. Management may include avoidance or mitigation measures to prevent or minimize adverse effects to special status animal species. Restoration or improvement measures could involve specific remedies with the potential for adjustments in ongoing resource management. Due to the variability in habitat use by special status species, management actions could be required within any of the habitat types described in this Proposed RMP/FEIS.

Bat gates would be installed at the entrances to abandoned mines to protect roost sites from disturbances while still allowing bat movement.

Alternative B

Natural processes would be emphasized except for management of critical habitat for federally listed animal species where natural processes are likely to conflict with species conservation or recovery. Management of special status species habitat would primarily be through passive measures associated with development and implementation of other resource management actions and associated themes of this RMP, except where required by law, such as compliance with the ESA, CWA, or Steens Act.

Permanent protection of designated critical habitat for the Borax Lake chub would be pursued through purchase of nonpublic lands within critical habitat currently owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) or through establishment of a Conservation Agreement and easement among the BLM, TNC, USFWS and the ODFW to close the area to livestock grazing, mineral/geothermal exploration, and motorized access. The BLM would coordinate development of water quality standards and monitoring with the DEQ, USFWS, ODFW, and TNC concerning habitat and population trends for Borax Lake chub.

Bat gates would be installed at the entrances to abandoned mines. These areas would be withdrawn from mineral entry.

Alternative C

Management of special status species habitat could include active and passive measures associated with development and implementation of other resource management actions and associated themes of this RMP. Active restoration for specific habitat attributes may be developed through watershed assessment or site specific activity plans or both. Where natural processes conflict with or substantially delay conservation, active restoration could be implemented to promote restoration of natural processes.

A variety of management actions or land use adjustments could be required to maintain, restore, or improve habitat for special status species. Management may include avoidance or mitigation measures to prevent or minimize adverse effects to special status animal species. Restoration or improvement measures could involve remedies that lead to adjustments in ongoing resource management. Due to the variability in habitat use by special status species, management actions could be required within any of the habitat types described in this plan.

Permanent protection of designated critical habitat for the Borax Lake chub would be pursued through the purchase of nonpublic lands within critical habitat currently owned by TNC, or through establishment of a Conservation Agreement and easement among the BLM, TNC, USFWS and the ODFW to close the area to livestock grazing, mineral/geothermal exploration, and motorized access. The BLM would coordinate development of water quality standards and monitoring with the DEQ, USFWS, ODFW, and TNC concerning habitat and population trends for Borax Lake chub.

Bat gates would be installed at the entrances to abandoned mines. These areas would be withdrawn from mineral entry.

Proposed RMP

Management of special status species under this alternative would be similar to Alternative C. However, development and implementation of passive and active measures to maintain, restore, or improve specific habitat attributes would be developed through watershed assessment or site specific activity plans, or both, to balance a variety of resource management and uses. Permanent protection of Borax Lake chub critical habitat would be pursued through establishment of a Conservation Agreement or other cooperative agreement among the BLM, TNC, USFWS, ODFW, or other private landowners to manage and protect the area for the conservation or recovery of the species, including closing the area to livestock grazing, off-road travel, and limiting or closing vehicle access. The BLM would coordinate development of water quality standards and monitoring with the DEQ, USFWS, ODFW, and TNC, or other private landowner(s), concerning habitat and population trends for Borax Lake chub.

Bat gates would be installed at the entrances to abandoned mines to protect roost sites from disturbances while still allowing bat movement. Specific critical sites would be considered for withdrawal from mineral entry.

Alternative E

Management of special status species would be conducted through development and implementation of passive and active measures to maintain, restore, or improve specific habitat attributes while promoting commodity production and public uses. Localized protection of habitat, such as riparian exclosures, and mitigation of potential adverse affects to threatened or endangered species would be emphasized. Management would provide habitat conditions that favor

individual special status species. Fish and wildlife community goals would be secondary to goals for individual species. Restoration or improvement of habitat for special status species would focus on game species, and would serve as on-site and off-site mitigation.

Bat gates would be installed at the entrances to abandoned mines to protect roost sites from disturbances, while allowing bat movement.

Objective 3. Manage big sagebrush communities to meet the life history requirements of sagebrushdependent special status species.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Areas used by Greater sage-grouse and other special status species would be identified with the ODFW or the USFWS. Habitat management would be coordinated across agency boundaries.

Alternative A

Variable desired conditions of big sagebrush cover would be determined on a site-by-site basis to benefit special status species. Big sagebrush habitat would be managed in accordance with the Migratory Bird Executive Order and the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines.

Limited emphasis would be placed on specifically providing habitat for nongame wildlife species. Crucial big game and Greater sage-grouse habitat would be protected from large scale vegetation treatment projects or wildland fires.

Alternative B

Natural processes would be allowed to determine future big sagebrush conditions. To the extent practicable, management would be in accordance with the Migratory Bird Executive Order and the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines.

Alternative C

Big sagebrush habitat would be managed for the benefit of special status species, and to meet the DRC in all big sagebrush habitats throughout the Planning Area. Big sagebrush habitat would be managed in accordance with the Migratory Bird Executive Order and the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines.

Proposed RMP

Big sagebrush habitat would be managed for the benefit of special status species and to meet the DRC in most big sagebrush habitats throughout the Planning Area. Big sagebrush habitat would be managed in accordance with the Migratory Bird Executive Order and the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines.

Alternative E

Big sagebrush would be reestablished where economically important special status species are present. To the extent practicable, management would be in accordance with the Migratory Bird Executive Order and the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines.

Objective 4. Evaluate habitat requirements and conditions for the reintroduction of extirpated species into historic habitat in the Planning Area.

Alternative A

In coordination with the USFWS and the ODFW, a determination would be made whether habitat conditions exist to allow the successful reintroduction of locally or regionally extirpated special status species such as Columbia sharp-tailed grouse and mountain quail. A determination would be made whether habitat improvements, if any, are needed to create suitable habitat for reintroductions.

Alternative B

In coordination with the USFWS and the ODFW, a determination would be made whether habitat conditions exist to allow the successful reintroduction of locally or regionally extirpated special status species such as Columbia sharp-tailed grouse and mountain quail, and other species.

Proposed RMP and Alternatives C and E

In coordination with the USFWS and the ODFW, a determination would be made whether habitat conditions exist to allow the successful reintroduction of locally or regionally extirpated special status species such as Columbia sharp-tailed grouse and mountain quail, and other species. A determination would be made whether habitat improvements, if any, are needed to create suitable habitat for reintroductions.

Objective 5. Maintain, restore, or improve bighorn sheep habitat and allow for maintenance or further expansion of bighorn sheep populations as defined by the ODFW in Oregon's Bighorn Sheep Management Plan.

Management Common to All Alternatives

In the Steens Mountain Wilderness, all actions such as transplants, trapping, distribution of medicine, emergency situations, and maintenance of existing guzzlers would be authorized in accordance with the Steens Act, the Wilderness Act, and Appendix B of House Report 101-405 of the 101st Congress. MRDG analysis would be completed on all actions. Where these same actions occur in WSAs, the WSA IMP would be followed.

Proposed RMP and Alternatives A and E

The BLM would coordinate with the ODFW on population management of bighorn sheep. Transplants, reintroductions, and natural expansion of bighorn sheep would be allowed. Where needed, poor quality habitat in identified historic range would be improved. If the ODFW determines that excess animals are available, transplants out of the herds would be authorized.

Up to ten sites would be identified for construction of low impact, natural appearing water sources or wildlife guzzlers (2000 to 3000 gal capacity) in identified historic habitat.

Bighorn sheep habitat maintenance, restoration, or improvement would be emphasized within existing use areas and proposed reintroduction areas as identified in current land use plans, wildlife habitat management plans, and the ODFW's most current Bighorn Sheep Management Plan. Bighorn sheep pioneering outside the range would be allowed where no disease transmission conflicts exist.

All new grazing applications for domestic sheep and goat permits or proposed conversions of class of livestock from cattle to sheep or goats, will be evaluated for consistency with the BLM "Revised Guidelines for Management of Domestic Sheep and Goats in Native Wild Sheep Habitats." These guidelines will be implemented where new permits or conversions could occur within or near wild sheep habitats. Cooperative efforts will be made with private landowners and current domestic sheep and goat permittees to reduce the chance of mixing of domestic sheep and goats with wild sheep.

Alternative B

Bighorn sheep management would allow for natural processes to occur. The range expansion of bighorn sheep populations would be determined by natural processes such as population growth and natural dispersal. No reintroductions or transplants would be conducted in identified historic range. Population numbers would be allowed to exceed management objectives, but no transplants out of the herds would be allowed.

Up to five sites would be identified for construction of low impact, natural appearing water sources in identified historic habitat. Fences that restrict bighorn movements and impede access to water would be removed.

Livestock grazing, including domestic sheep and goats, would not be authorized; therefore, a buffer would not be required to minimize disease transmission.

Alternative C

The BLM would coordinate with the ODFW on population management of bighorn sheep. Transplants, reintroductions, and natural expansion of bighorn sheep would be allowed. Population numbers would be allowed to exceed management objectives. Transplants out of the herds would be authorized if the ODFW determines that excess animals are available for removal.

Up to ten sites would be identified for construction of low impact, natural appearing water sources in identified historic habitat.

Bighorn sheep habitat maintenance, restoration, or improvement would be emphasized within existing use areas and proposed reintroduction areas as identified in current land use plans, wildlife habitat management plans, and the ODFW's most current Bighorn Sheep Management Plan. Bighorn sheep pioneering outside the range would be allowed where no disease transmission conflicts exist.

All new grazing applications for domestic sheep and goat permits or proposed conversions of class of livestock from cattle to sheep or goats, will be evaluated for consistency with the BLM "Revised Guidelines for Management of Domestic Sheep and Goats in Native Wild Sheep Habitats." These guidelines will be implemented where new permits or conversions could occur within or near wild sheep habitats. Cooperative efforts will be made with private landowners and current domestic sheep and goat permittees to reduce the chance of mixing of domestic sheep and goats with wild sheep.

2.7.3.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.7.4 Redband Trout Reserve

2.7.4.1 Goal - Manage the RTR to conserve, protect and enhance the Donner und Blitzen population of redband trout, and provide opportunities for scientific research, environmental education, and fish and wildlife oriented recreation.

2.7.4.1.1 Management Framework

The Steens Act mandates the Secretary of the Interior to designate the RTR and administer it consistent with the Wilderness Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRs Act). Administration of the RTR shall be through consultation with the SMAC and cooperation with the ODFW. The legislation identifies the RTR as consisting of the Donner und Blitzen River in the Steens Mountain Wilderness above its confluence with Fish Creek and the federal riparian lands immediately adjacent to the river, excluding private lands adjacent to the Donner und Blitzen River or its tributaries.

The ODFW has primary responsibility and authority for fish population management in the RTR.

2.7.4.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Define the RTR boundary.

Alternative A

The boundaries of the RTR are not currently delineated.

Proposed RMP and Alternatives B and C

The RTR would consist of the public land portion of the Donner und Blitzen River and tributaries upstream of its confluence with Fish Creek to the longitudinal extent of current and future redband trout distribution, and the width of the flood prone area.

Alternative E

The RTR would consist of the public land portion of the mainstream Donner und Blitzen River upstream of its confluence with Fish Creek, and the width of the flood prone area.

Objective 2. Maintain genetic integrity of redband trout in the RTR.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Coordinate and cooperate with the ODFW and the Malheur NWR in developing or revising Native Fish Conservation Plan(s) for the Donner und Blitzen River subbasin in support of the ODFW's Native Fish Conservation Policy.

Objective 3. Increase the distribution and abundance of redband trout in the RTR through maintenance or restoration of habitat quality and quantity.

Alternative A

Riparian and aquatic habitats would be managed to maintain or progress toward PFC, water quality standards, and fish habitat values through existing management. The RTR would be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act and the WSR Act, as appropriate. The Page Springs gauging weir would be removed if scientifically justified and funds are available.

Proposed RMP and Alternatives B and C

Riparian and aquatic habitats would be managed for an advanced ecological status that provides a diversity of fish habitat values including spawning, rearing, cover, forage, and cold-water refuge, and in accordance with the Wilderness Act and the WSR Act, as appropriate. Alternatives would be developed, evaluated, and implemented with the USFWS, ODFW, SMAC, and local interests and organizations, for removal or modification of the Page Springs gauging weir in order to facilitate upstream migration of redband trout and other aquatic species while limiting the migration capabilities of nonnative fish.

Alternative E

Riparian and aquatic habitats would be managed in a manner that provides a diversity of fish habitat values including spawning, rearing, cover, forage, and cold-water refuge, and in accordance with the Wilderness Act and the WSR Act, as appropriate. Alternatives would be developed, evaluated, and implemented for removal or modification of the Page Springs gauging weir with the USFWS, ODFW, SMAC, and local interests and organizations in order to facilitate upstream migration of redband trout and other aquatic species while limiting the migration capabilities of nonnative fish.

2.8 Paleontological Resources

2.8.1 Goal 1 - Preserve, protect, and manage vertebrate, noteworthy invertebrate, and plant paleontological resources in accordance with existing laws and regulations to make these resources available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.

2.8.1.1 Management Framework

The BLM is required by law, regulations, and Executive Orders to manage paleontological resources such that they would be preserved and protected from destruction, and that appropriate uses would be made of such resources.

The BLM regulates the collection of fossils on public lands under its jurisdiction according to the following laws and regulations: the FLPMA Section 310 and 302(b); 43 CFR 8365.1-5; and 43 CFR 3622. These laws provide direction for what individuals who wish to collect fossils on public land may do. Other federal agencies have similar authorities and policies for the lands they administer.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act

Included in the many charges given to the BLM by the FLPMA are the following: (a) to manage the public lands in a manner that protects the quality of scientific and other values; (b) to see that these lands and resources are periodically and systematically inventoried; (c) to use such inventory data in developing plans for the management of these lands;

and (d) to manage the use of such lands and resources through easements, licenses, and permits. Management actions on public lands would be inventoried for paleontological resources prior to ground disturbing activity.

BLM Regulations 43 CFR 8365.1-5

Subject to the provisions of this regulation, common invertebrate and paleobotanical fossils may be collected in reasonable amounts for noncommercial purposes without a permit. However, in order to protect significant localities, areas may be closed to the collection of invertebrate and paleobotanical fossils except under permit. Vertebrate fossils such as dinosaur bones, fish, footprints, etc., may only be collected under a permit. The BLM issues permits to qualified paleontologists who agree to put their collections into repositories where they remain the property of the federal government and are accessible for study, education, and public enjoyment.

BLM Regulations 43 CFR 3622

Subject to the provisions of this regulation, persons may collect, without a permit, up to 25 pounds plus one piece per person per day of petrified wood, up to a maximum of 250 pounds in one calendar year, for personal, noncommercial purposes.

All areas within the Planning Area are evaluated for classification into three paleontological conditions as written in the BLM Manual H-8270-II-3.

Condition 1 - Areas that are known to contain vertebrate fossils or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils. Consideration of paleontological resources is necessary if the Field Office review of the available information indicates that such fossils are present in the area.

Condition 2 - Areas with exposures of geological units or settings that have high potential to contain vertebrate fossils or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils. Geologic units from which such fossils have been recovered elsewhere may require further assessment where they are present and exposed in the area of consideration.

Condition 3 - Areas that are very unlikely to produce vertebrate fossils or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils based on surficial geology, igneous or metamorphic rocks, extremely young alluvium, colluvium or aeolian deposits, the presence of deep soils. However, if possible, it should be noted at what depth bedrock may be expected in order to determine whether fossiliferous deposits may be uncovered during surface disturbing activities.

2.8.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Unless otherwise noted, the following management objectives and actions apply to the AMU and CMPA.

Objective 1. Using predictive modeling, locate significant localities which may be in conflict with other resource uses.

Alternative A

A portion of the Planning Area has not been inventoried for paleontological resources. Under this alternative, no program is in force to find significant localities in other resource use areas. Funding is being sought for challenge cost shares with universities and other federal agencies for inventory and assessment. The last inventory/assessment was completed in 1999.

Alternative B

Management would implement sample inventory for significant localities within recreational use areas in the entire Planning Area.

Alternative C

Implement Planning Area-wide sample inventory for significant localities where they may be in conflict with other resource uses.

Proposed RMP

This alternative is the same as Alternative C.

Alternative E

This alternative is the same as Alternative C, except that the inventory sample would be larger in order to account for increased commodity production in other resources.

Objective 2. Scientifically excavate significant paleontological localities in cooperation with universities and other federal agencies.

Excavation in wilderness areas would require NEPA analysis, minimum requirement decision, and under certain circumstances, State Director approval.

The Proposed RMP and Alternatives A and C

Under current management, paleontological localities are excavated when the budget allows. In Alternatives C and the Proposed RMP, significant localities would be researched to generate data for use in site management and off-site interpretation. Research efforts would be focused in areas where resource conflicts require management action. Eroding paleontological material at Thousand Springs, Catlow, Pueblo localities, and other similar localities would be recorded or salvaged once every five years.

Alternative B

Management would implement limited research of significant localities to generate data for use in site management and off-site interpretation. Surface paleontological material at Thousand Springs, Catlow, Pueblo localities, and other similar localities would be recorded or salvaged once every five years.

Alternative E

Management would emphasize natural history tourism and would implement large scale prospecting and excavation at significant localities, as well as recover fossil specimens and data used for interpretation and site management.

Objective 3. Protect significant paleontological localities.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Law enforcement surveillance is focused in areas in Catlow Valley, Pueblo Valley, and in the Long Draw. Protective measures at significant sites would be used as appropriate.

2.8.2 Goal 2 - Increase public knowledge of, appreciation for, and sensitivity to paleontological resources.

2.8.2.1 Management Framework

The BLM is required by law to preserve and protect cultural and paleontological resources. In order to do so, the public must be aware of resource values and the effects that human activities have upon them. Cultural and paleontological resources are fragile and irreplaceable when damaged or destroyed by actions of the public. Through vandalism and natural erosion, these resources are disappearing. If the public understands the effects of their actions and feels it has equity in the nation's cultural and natural history heritage, the resources would be appreciated and better protected from vandalism and illegal removal. Additionally, interpretation of paleontological resources improves recreational opportunities in the Planning Area and provides a high demand public service.

2.8.2.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Create paleontology interpretive opportunities for public education.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Actions would be initiated to develop public appreciation and protection through education regarding the values and importance of cultural resources. Permanent interpretive facilities would be constructed outside the Steens Mountain Wilderness. All interpretation projects would be implemented only if they would not effect the paleontological values at the subject locality.

Alternative A

Construct portable and static displays for local, regional, and national education where applicable. Produce brochures for off-site distribution. One paleontological poster has been completed under current management.

Cost-share programs with universities, museums, researchers, and volunteers would be continued to inventory, analyze, and research the paleontological resources within the Planning Area.

Alternative B

Same as Alternative A, except on-site interpretative facilities would not be constructed. The focus of paleontological interpretation under this alternative would be the creation of portable and static off-site displays and brochures.

Alternative C

Same as Alternative A, except on-site interpretative signage would not be implemented. The focus of paleontological interpretation under this alternative would be the creation of portable and static off-site displays and self-guided walking tour brochures.

Proposed RMP

Management actions would be the same as described under Alternative A.

Alternative E

Same as Alternative A, except a higher level of interpretation, including on-site facilities, would be implemented to augment natural history tourism opportunities.

2.8.3 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.9 Cultural Resources

2.9.1 Goal 1–Preserve, protect, and manage cultural resources in accordance with existing laws, regulations, and Executive Orders, in coordination/consultation with the Burns Paiute Tribe, other American Indian tribes, Harney County Historical Society and other heritage groups to make cultural resources available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.

2.9.1.1 Management Framework

The BLM is required by laws, regulations, and Executive Orders to manage cultural resources such that they would be preserved and protected from destruction, and that appropriate uses would be made of such resources. The Antiquities Act of 1906 provides for the protection of archaeological resources on all public lands and requires permits for those who excavate or appropriate these resources. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended, defines and protects archaeological resources on public lands, establishes a permit system for resource users, and requires agencies to provide for public education and continuing inventory of public lands. Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, provide a national policy for historic preservation, establish a National Register

of Historic Places designation for important properties, protect sites from destruction without appropriate data recovery, and require that historic properties be utilized in agency missions, when warranted. Executive Order 11953 directs federal agencies to inventory public lands and to nominate eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places. Executive Order 13287 entitled "Preserve America" requires Federal agencies to "prepare an assessment of the current status of its inventory of historic properties" and to "ensure that the management of historic properties in its ownership is conducted in a manner that promotes the long-term preservation and use of those properties." These laws, regulations, and Executive Orders further require that such management be coordinated with the appropriate American Indian tribes and individuals.

All management actions on public lands and private land projects that are federally funded, permitted, or assisted require completion of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. This consists of a literature review, a site survey on the ground to determine the presence or absence of sites, and site evaluation in coordination with the Burns Paiute Tribe and other tribes, as appropriate. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer occurs with projects outside the scope of the Oregon Protocol of the National Programmatic Agreement of 1997 and when National Register listed or eligible properties may be impacted.

All sites that have currently been identified, as well as sites identified in the future, are evaluated for placement in one of four use categories as specified in BLM Manual 8110. These four uses are as follows:

1) Conservation for future use: This category places a site in protection from destruction with the intent to have it available at an unspecified date in the future for use in research or public interpretation.

2) Public use: Sites placed in this category are used for recreation, public interpretation, education, etc.

3) Experimental use: Sites placed in this category are used in scientific research. Such use may result in the complete consumption of the site in some cases. Sites may be placed in public use as a result of the research that is conducted.

4) Discharged sites: These are sites that no longer exist or have been so damaged that they have no value of any kind. Sites may be destroyed by erosion, consumption in research, or through destruction caused by humans.

2.9.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Unless otherwise noted, all management actions apply to both the AMU and CMPA.

Objective 1. Using predictive modeling, locate significant sites that may be in conflict with other resource uses.

Alternative A

Ninety-three percent of the Planning Area has not been inventoried for cultural resources. As a result, an unknown number of significant sites may be impacted by other resource uses. Under current management, sites in conflict with other resource uses are mitigated on a case-by-case basis. Funding for the predictive modeling plan is currently being sought.

Alternative B

Management would inventory for significant sites in recreation use areas Planning Area-wide.

The Proposed RMP and Alternatives C

Planning Area-wide sample inventory would be implemented for significant sites where they may be in conflict with other resources uses.

Alternative E

This alternative is the same as Alternative C, except that the inventory sample would be larger to account for increased commodity production in other resources.

Objective 2. Use Section 110 inventories to locate significant sites in the Planning Area.

The Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, B, and C

Current management completes cultural program funded archaeological inventories at a rate of approximately 750 acres a year. Inventory has been conducted in recreation use areas atop Steens Mountain and in the Alvord Valley. Inventory data are used in interpretation and public education. Management under the Proposed RMP and Alternatives B and C would complete cultural program funded archaeological inventories in areas of high potential for significant sites within the Planning Area. A minimum of five hundred acres per year would be the proposed accomplishment.

Alternative E

Heritage tourism and increased cultural program funded inventories would be emphasized in areas of high potential for significant sites within the Planning Area. Inventory data and archaeological specimens would be utilized in interpretation and other heritage recreation opportunities.

Objective 3. Excavate significant cultural sites in cooperation with universities, the Burns Paiute Tribe, other tribes, and other heritage partners.

The Proposed RMP and Alternatives A and C

Excavation in wilderness would require appropriate NEPA analysis, a minimum requirement decision, and State Director approval.

Research at significant sites is a key component of current management. Past and present partners include the University of Nevada, Reno; Washington State University; and the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Research data are routinely used in interpretation and public education. Under Alternatives C and the Proposed RMP, management would entail research of significant sites or groups of sites to generate data for use in site management and off-site interpretation. Whenever possible, research efforts would be focused in areas where resource conflicts require management action.

Under current management, two regionally significant sites (site names withheld at the request of the Burns Paiute Tribe) in the AMU are visited twice yearly to record and salvage eroding material. Eroding cultural material at significant subsurface sites would continue to be recorded or salvaged on an annual basis.

Alternative B

Management would research significant sites or groups of sites on a limited basis to generate data for use in site management and off-site interpretation.

On an annual basis, eroding cultural material at significant subsurface sites would be recorded or salvaged.

Alternative E

Heritage tourism and increased archaeological research would be emphasized at sites or groups of sites. Research data and archaeological specimens would be utilized in interpretation and other heritage tourism opportunities.

Objective 4. Use protective measures to safeguard significant cultural sites.

Alternative A

No physical protection measures have been currently implemented with the exception of restricted access to and a caretaker at Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District. Restricted access is achieved by locked gates at the south entrance to the District and on the Cold Springs Road near Desert Meadows. Motorized access to this segment of the Cold Springs Road would be by permit only. Vehicle access to the ranch is allowed only during the daytime and only when the caretaker is present.

Law enforcement is active, focusing surveillance in the Catlow Valley, Alvord Valley, and Steens Mountain regions.

Known cultural sites within wildland fire areas are monitored to study fire impacts and prevent post-fire looting.

Alternative B

Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District would be protected by restricted access and an on-site caretaker during the visitor season. Access to the historic district from the north via the Cold Springs Road would not be allowed under this alternative.

Law enforcement would be provided, focusing surveillance in the Catlow Valley, Alvord Valley, Steens Mountain, and Coyote Lake regions.

Known cultural sites within wildland fire areas would be monitored and assessed in order to study fire impacts and to prevent post-fire looting.

Alternative C,

The Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District would be protected by restricted access and an on-site caretaker during the visitor season. Access to the historic district from the north via the Cold Springs Road would not be allowed under this alternative.

At significant sites in Catlow Valley and in the Alvord Basin, management would fence the BLM portion; close the area to OHV and mechanized vehicle use; close roads except for administrative and permittee use; and apply riprap at a significant site in the Alvord Basin. Administrative and data recovery measures to mitigate effects would be applied, as appropriate.

Law enforcement would be provided, focusing surveillance in the Catlow Valley, Alvord Valley, Steens Mountain, and Coyote Lake regions.

Known cultural sites within wildland fire areas would be monitored in order to study fire effects and to prevent post-fire looting.

Proposed RMP and Alternative E

The Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District would be protected by restricted access and an on-site caretaker during the visitor season. Restricted access is achieved by locked gates at the south entrance to the District and on the Cold Springs Road near Desert Meadows. Motorized access to this segment of the Cold Springs Road would be by permit only.

At significant sites in Catlow Valley and in the Alvord Basin, management would fence the BLM portion; close the area to OHV and mechanized vehicle use; close roads except for administrative and permittee use; and apply riprap at a significant site in the Alvord Basin. Administrative and data recovery measures to mitigate effects would be applied, as appropriate.

Law enforcement would be provided, focusing surveillance in the Catlow Valley, Alvord Valley, Steens Mountain, and Coyote Lake regions.

Known cultural sites within wildland fire areas would be monitored in order to study fire effects and to prevent post-fire looting.

Objective 5. Pursue land acquisitions to bring significant sites into public ownership.

Alternative A

A land trade in Catlow Valley with a private land owner to acquire a portion of a regionally significant archaeological site is currently in the initial stages.

The Proposed RMP and Alternatives B and C

As the opportunity arises, acquire the private portion of a site in Alvord Valley and a site in Catlow Valley as well as other non-BLM significant archaeological sites.

Alternative E

As this alternative would not encourage land acquisitions, land purchases funded by the cultural resources program would not be pursued.

Objective 6. Stabilize, restore, or reconstruct significant historic structures to provide public safety and recreational and interpretive opportunities.

The Proposed RMP and Alternatives A and C

The Frederick Riddle House, cookhouse, barn, and Benjamin Riddle House have been restored within the last eight years. Other historic structures in Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District such as the Frederick Riddle cold house, blacksmith shop/tackroom, and Benjamin Riddle cold house are currently maintained in their current condition and would be restored or reconstructed under the Proposed RMP and Alternatives A and C. The Walter Riddle House was destroyed by wildland fire in 1994. All that remains is a stone fireplace. A number of detailed photos exist of the building and it could be reconstructed in the same location, budget permitting.

Management would inventory and assess other historic structures in the Planning Area, develop restoration plans, and implement them where appropriate.

Alternative B

Historic structures at Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District would be maintained in their current condition.

Other historic structures in the Planning Area would be inventoried and assessed.

Alternative E

Management would increase inventory, assessment, and restoration activities in order to support heritage tourism.

2.9.2 Goal 2 - Increase public knowledge of, appreciation for, and sensitivity to cultural resources.

2.9.2.1 Management Framework

The BLM is required by law, regulation, and policy to preserve and protect cultural resources. Public education and interpretation efforts are intended to improve understanding of these resources, their value, and agents of effects. The result should be a greater appreciation of the resources and ultimately, less site vandalism.

Another facet of public education and interpretation is the positive link to enhanced heritage tourism, a high demand public service.

Cultural resources interpretation projects would be done in coordination with American Indians, and implemented only if they would not affect cultural resource values.

2.9.2.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Create cultural resources interpretive opportunities and sites for public education in coordination with the Burns Paiute Tribe, other tribes, and other heritage partners, as appropriate.

Alternative A

Portable interpretive displays on various aspects of prehistory and history in the Planning Area have been created under this alternative. On-site interpretation at the Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District has been funded and will be completed in 2005. On-site interpretation at Andrews Town Site, Fish Lake, and other locations has not been implemented under this alternative.

Alternative B

On-site interpretation at the Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District has been funded and will be completed in 2005. Management would construct portable and static interpretive displays for presentation at off-site locations only.

The Proposed RMP and Alternative C

On-site interpretation at the Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District has been funded and will be completed in 2005. Interpretive panels would be constructed and installed at Andrews Town Site, Fish Lake, and other locations where applicable. A Riddle Brothers National Historic District self-guided tour brochure would be developed by 2005 and distributed at the Burns Field Office, the Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District, and other appropriate outlets. The tour would be trail-less, with historic structures, features, and equipment identified in the field by a number or letter routered into the side of a low juniper post. Portable and static displays for local, regional, and national education would be constructed where applicable.

Alternative E

On-site interpretation at the Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District has been funded and will be completed in 2005. Under Alternative E, cultural program funding for interpretation may be increased in order to support heritage tourism.

2.9.3 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.10 Native American Traditional Practices

2.10.1 Goal – Protect traditional sites, landforms, burial sites, resources, and other areas of interest in consultation with the Burns Paiute Tribe and other tribes.

2.10.1.1 Management Framework

Federal policy, laws, regulations, and Executive Orders require the BLM to consult and coordinate activities with American Indian tribes so that their rights and interests are considered when land use decisions are made, and that American Indian traditions and traditional uses are addressed. Specifically, the agency must comply with the National Historic Preservation Act; the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act; the American Indian Religious Freedom Act; Regulations 36 CFR 800, section 106 and 119; and Executive Order 13007 (Sacred Sites). BLM Manual Section 8160, entitled "Native American Coordination and Consultation", establishes agency policy regarding American Indians, and integrates into all programs the management of resources valued by American Indians. The Steens Act specifically mentions Indian tribal rights that state "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish the rights of any Indian tribe. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish tribal rights, including those of the Burns Paiute Tribe, regarding access to Federal lands for tribal activities, including spiritual, cultural, and traditional food gathering activities."

The BLM has signed MOUs with the Burns Paiute Tribe, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Umatilla Indian Reservations. These memoranda have been established to formalize consultation and cooperation.

2.10.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Unless otherwise noted, all objectives and management actions apply to the AMU and CMPA.

Objective 1. Monitor and protect Burns Paiute tribal and other tribal interest areas.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Management would continue consultation/coordination with the Burns Paiute Tribe and other tribes to identify traditional practice areas in the Planning Area. Applicable Traditional Cultural Properties would be nominated. Burial sites in the Planning Area would be monitored. Coordination and consultation with American Indian tribes would be documented under all alternatives.

Objective 2. Integrate maintenance and protection of native subsistence species into vegetation management activities.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Management would identify plants of cultural, traditional, and economic importance during botanical and cultural inventories, and would input information into the Freedom of Information Act-exempt Geographic Information System (GIS) layer.

The Burns Paiute Tribe and other tribes would be consulted on vegetation management projects, especially those involving large scale vegetation manipulation.

Coordination and consultation with American Indian tribes would be documented under all alternatives.

2.10.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.11 Visual Resources

2.11.1 Goal - Manage public land actions and activities in a manner consistent with VRM class objectives.

2.11.1.1 Management Framework

Section 102(8) of the FLPMA declares that public land would be managed to protect the quality of scenic values and, where appropriate, to preserve and protect certain public land in its natural condition. The NEPA, Section 101(b), requires federal agencies to "assure for all Americans...esthetically pleasing surroundings." Section 102 of the NEPA requires agencies to "utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach that would ensure the integrated use of...Environmental Design Acts in the planning and decision making" process. Guidelines for the identification of visual resource inventory classes on public land are contained in BLM Manual Handbook H-8410-1, Visual Resource Inventory. The establishment of visual resource inventory classes on public land is based on an evaluation of the landscape's scenic qualities, public sensitivity toward the landscape, and visibility of the landscape from travel routes or observation points. VRM classes are designated through the RMP process. VRM class objectives are managed through application of BLM Manual Handbook H-8431-1, Visual Resource Contrast Rating.

2.11.1.2 Management Common to all Alternatives

WSAs, designated wild WSRs, and the Steens Mountain Wilderness are designated as VRM Class I. Should a WSA not be designated as wilderness by Congress, the area would be evaluated to determine the appropriate VRM designation, based on laws, regulations, and policies in place at that time.

2.11.1.3 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Protect, maintain, improve, or restore visual resource values by managing all public lands in accordance with the VRM system.

Alternative A

Planning Area
Maintain the existing Andrews MFP VRM classes in all areas (Table 2.11.1). CMPA and AMU VRM classes are shown in Tables 2.11.2 and 2.11.3.

Management would continue as described in the existing Andrews MFP and plan amendments. Visual resources in existing ACECs/RNAs would be managed as shown in Table 2.22.2. Eligible WSRs would be managed according to the surrounding VRM class designation.

Alternative B

Planning Area
Manage visual resources to allow natural processes to determine visual quality. All lands within the Planning Area would be designated as VRM Class II, except where VRM Class I is required by law, policy, or regulation.

Visual resources in the ACECs/RNAs would be designated as shown in Table 2.21.2.

Table 2.11.1: VRM Class Designation Acreages by Alternative in the Planning Area (Public Land Acres Only)

Designation	Alternative A (acres)	Alternative B (acres)	Alternative C (acres)	Proposed RMP (acres)	Alternative E (acres)
Class I	852,250	850,657	854,308	852,255	852,254
Class II	239,321	798,813	250,935	206,972	28,880
Class III	121,048	0	544,227	214,487	66,938
Class IV	436,851	0	0	375,756	701,398
TOTAL	**1,649,470**	**1,649,470**	**1,649,470**	**1,649,470**	**1,649,470**

Table 2.11.2: VRM Class Designation Acreages by Alternative in the CMPA (Public Land Acres Only)

Designation	Alternative A (acres)	Alternative B (acres)	Alternative C (acres)	Proposed RMP (acres)	Alternative E (acres)
Class I	291,315	290,492	293,386	291,333	291,336
Class II	95,939	137,664	114,862	76,012	13,052
Class III	2,614	0	19,908	60,033	65,569
Class IV	38,288	0	0	778	58,199
TOTAL	**428,156**	**428,156**	**428,156**	**428,156**	**428,156**

Table 2.11.3: VRM Class Designation Acreages by Alternative in the AMU (Public Land Acres Only)

Designation	Alternative A (acres)	Alternative B (acres)	Alternative C (acres)	Proposed RMP (acres)	Alternative E (acres)
Class I	560,935	560,165	560,922	560,922	560,918
Class II	143,382	661,149	136,073	130,960	15,828
Class III	118,434	0	524,319	154,454	1,369
Class IV	398,563	0	0	374,978	643,199
TOTAL	**1,221,314**	**1,221,314**	**1,221,314**	**1,221,314**	**1,221,314**

Alternative C

Planning Area
Visual resources would be managed to emphasize protection of natural values. Existing VRM classes would be amended. The VRM classes for the ACECs/RNAs would be designated as shown in Table 2.22.2. All existing seedings would be designated as VRM Class III. The visual resources of all suitable WSRs would be managed according to the surrounding VRM class designation. Should a suitable WSR be designated as a wild WSR by Congress, the WSR would be designated as VRM Class I. Other existing Andrews MFP VRM classes would be amended, as described below. The four parcels found to have wilderness characteristics would be designated as VRM Class II.

CMPA
The Steens Mountain ACEC would be designated as VRM Class I. The WJMA would be designated as VRM Class III. The remainder of the CMPA would be designated as VRM Class II.

AMU
All Andrews MFP VRM Class IV areas would be changed to VRM Class III. All Andrews MFP VRM Class II and III areas would not be amended.

Proposed RMP

Planning Area
All visual resources would be managed to improve natural values. ACECs/RNAs would be designated as shown in Table 2.21.2. All existing seedings would be designated as VRM Class III. Other existing Andrews MFP VRM classes would be amended, as described below.

CMPA
The WJMA would be designated as VRM Classes III and IV. The remainder of the CMPA would be designated as VRM Classes II and III.

AMU
The existing Andrews MFP VRM classes would be maintained.

Alternative E

Planning Area
Visual resources would be managed as determined in the Andrews MFP, as reinventoried or as detailed below. ACECs/RNAs would be designated as shown in Table 2.22.2. All existing seedings would be designated as VRM Class IV. Other existing Andrews MFP VRM classes would be amended, as described below.

CMPA
The WJMA would be designated as VRM Class IV. The remainder of the CMPA would be designated as VRM Classes II, III, and IV.

AMU
The area between the Trout Creek Mountains WSAs and the area around Denio Creek would be designated as VRM Class II. The remainder of the AMU would be designated as VRM Class IV.

2.11.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.12 Social and Economic Values

2.12.1 Goal - Manage public lands to provide social and economic benefits to local residents, businesses, visitors, and future generations.

2.12.1.1 Management Framework

The BLM is required by Section 202 of the FLPMA to integrate "..physical, biological, economic and other sciences..." in developing land use plans (43 U.S.C. 1712). Section 102 of the NEPA requires the integrated use of the social sciences in assessing impacts of an action on the human environment (42 U.S.C. 4332). The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations state that when an EIS is prepared "and economic or social and natural or physical environmental effects are interrelated, then the [EIS] would discuss all of these effects on the human environment" (40 CFR 1508.14). Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice) requires federal agencies to "...identify and address... disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States..." As indicated by these legal mandates, social science information is required to make informed, legal land use planning decisions. This section outlines the various management alternatives as they relate to social and economic values.

Historically, commodity values on public lands have been made available to private individuals or businesses through sales, permitting, or other methods. The federal government collects revenues when commodities are used. These commodities also generate private economic activity in the local, regional, national, and in some cases international economies.

Public lands provide or contribute to numerous environmental amenities such as clean water, scenic quality, and recreational opportunities. These amenities promote local communities as places to live, work, or visit. Public lands also attract visitors to the area, many of whom purchase goods and services, thereby generating local economic activity. Federal agencies, through business activities, generate economic activity in the local, regional, and national economies both as employers and purchasers of goods and services.

Public lands contribute to local governments where they are located. Many commodity programs include provisions to share collections with local governments. Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) are also made to compensate counties due to public lands being exempt from local property taxes. Continuation of programs limits disruption of existing economic structures. Guidance within the plan defines the amount of economic opportunity in the future, especially related to mining, recreation, grazing, agriculture, and tourism.

In its resource management planning, the BLM generally strives for a balance among current and future generations; local, regional and national interests; commodity uses and natural values; and physical, biological, and socioeconomic values.

In addition to the above, the Steens Act specified that the purpose of the CMPA is to "...preserve protect and manage the long term ecological integrity of Steens Mountain...." To achieve this purpose, the Steens Act delineated five objectives for the CMPA all of which have socioeconomic ramifications. In summary, they are to enact cooperative management projects, promote sustainable uses, promote cooperation with private landowners, promote traditional access for the Burns Paiute Tribe, promote proper management of all facets of the CMPA, and promote understanding and conflict reduction among Steens Mountain users and interests.

2.12.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

The following section outlines the management actions and emphasis by alternative for social and economic values as well as economically based resource uses including the following: energy and minerals; grazing management; lands and realty; transportation and roads; recreation; and OHVs and mechanized vehicles. See Table 2.13.1 and Sections 2.13 (Energy and Minerals), 2.15 (Grazing Management), 2.17 (Lands and Realty), 2.18 (Transportation and Roads), 2.19 (OHVs), and 2.20 (Recreation) for more details regarding the goals, objectives and management actions for these resource uses.

Objective 1. Work cooperatively with private and community groups and local government, Burns Paiute tribal, and other tribal governments to provide for customary uses consistent with other resource objectives and to sustain or improve local economies.

Alternative A

Commodity use would continue at existing levels. Contracts for services and sale of products would be made available to local residents as need and conditions permit. Natural resources would be managed as outlined in existing land use plans and the Steens Act, and staff would work cooperatively with public land users consistent with resource objectives.

Management of existing facilities (roads, recreation sites, and rangeland facilities and improvements) to promote commodity uses and continued access and availability of natural resource amenities would continue as outlined in existing land use plans and the Steens Act. When determining the need for additional facilities, existing management direction would continue.

Public and private partnerships would be created to achieve shared economic objectives. Mining, grazing, and recreation management would remain the same, with the exception of restrictions and designations as required by the Steens Act.

Livestock grazing use would continue to be authorized in the AMU consistent with the existing land use plan, the S&Gs (USDI 1997a), and applicable activity plans. Interim and long-term grazing management and stocking levels would continue to be adjusted in accordance with results of monitoring studies, allotment evaluations, and rangeland health assessments.

Lands currently open to locatable mineral activity would continue to be available. Approximately 467,831 acres would be open to locatable and leasable mineral exploration and development and 468,344 acres would be open to salable mineral exploration and development. Renewable energy authorization management would continue, consistent with existing land use planning, regulation, and law. There would be no renewable energy authorization exclusion or

avoidance areas, although special designations, planning decisions, and other factors may constrain or exclude renewable energy development.

Public lands would be retained, exchanged, and sold as outlined in Section 2.17. Lands may be acquired in any zone on a case-by-case basis by exchange, donation, or purchase, consistent with existing land use planning, regulation, and law.

New ROW facilities would be located within corridors on a case-by-case basis and designed to minimize impairment to special designations. There would be no land use authorization exclusion or avoidance areas except the Stonehouse WSA exclusion zone and the Kiger HMA avoidance area. Subject to the constraints discussed in Section 2.17, the entire Planning Area would be available on a case-by-case basis to ROW and other land uses including energy development, communications sites and military uses. Withdrawal and land classification actions would also be managed on a case-by-case basis.

Legal public or administrative access, including conservation and scenic easements, would be acquired on a case-by-case basis as the need arises. Emphasis would be placed on providing access for BLM administrative facilities and program-related activities. All land tenure actions would be reviewed for their effect on access.

Construction of new roads around private lands may be considered where easement acquisition is not feasible or desirable, subject to the limitations expressed in the Steens Act. Roads would be constructed and maintained as needed in the AMU. Roads in the CMPA would be retained and maintained at current levels, subject to the Steens Act. Existing recreation sites would generally be maintained at the current level; site expansions would be considered if needed to accommodate existing recreation use or reduce resource damage. SRPs would be issued on a case-by-case basis. OHV and mechanized vehicle designations and current use levels would continue.

Alternative B

This alternative emphasizes natural processes and limits commodity production; therefore, no commodity production from public land would be allowed except as required by law (i.e. the Steens Act). Natural resource amenities would continue to be provided at levels that meet or exceed existing legal requirements. Where needed, environmental quality would be improved to meet or exceed requirements, using administrative or project-related solutions that emphasize elimination of commodity production and public uses to protect natural values.

Under this alternative, natural processes would be allowed to operate with minimal human interference while providing for public health, safety, and facility maintenance. Alternatives would be developed for existing facilities that negatively effect natural values. Public and private partnerships would be created to achieve shared economic objectives within existing legal, regulatory, and administrative authorities.

No grazing use would be authorized in the Planning Area, and rangeland projects that support livestock grazing would not be planned or implemented. Rangeland projects that do not function to promote resource values or assist in meeting management objectives would be removed, and project sites would be rehabilitated.

The USDI would be petitioned to withdraw the entire Planning Area from locatable, leasable, and salable mineral exploration and development, except where required by law or where essential to protect human safety such as road construction under critical or emergency conditions.

All public lands in the Planning Area would be identified for retention to protect resources from commodity producing activities that could occur if the lands were conveyed into nonpublic ownership. The entire Planning Area would also be considered a ROW and land use authorization exclusion zone except for those authorizations necessary to provide reasonable access to nonpublic lands and interest in land subject to valid existing rights. In addition, the entire Planning Area would be recommended for withdrawal to protect the lands from energy and mineral exploration and development, military activities, and other commodity production.

Legal public or administrative access, including conservation and scenic easements, would be acquired, with emphasis on controlling public access, for protection of sensitive resource values. Land tenure actions would be designed to avoid facilitating public access to these areas. Construction of new roads around private lands would not be considered as an alternative for access easement acquisition. Some roads would be closed in order to maximize natural processes. Only existing recreation sites would be maintained. Many currently allowed activities would be limited or prohibited. Only the existing long-term CMPA SRPs would be authorized. All other SRPs would be cancelled with no new SRPS issued.

OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated roads in less than half of the Planning Area. The remainder of the Planning Area would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use.

Alternative C

Under this alternative, commodity production would be restricted in order to increase protection of natural values. New commodity use levels that can be maintained through time and that contribute to stability in the local livestock and mining industries would be established. Natural resource amenities would continue to be provided at levels that meet or exceed existing legal requirements. Where needed, administrative or project related solutions that protect or improve natural values would be used to improve environmental quality to meet or exceed requirements. Local contracts would be targeted for services to restore and maintain natural systems. Public and private partnerships would also be created to achieve shared economic objectives within existing legal, regulatory, and administrative authorities.

Natural values would be protected and conserved while allowing for tourism and commodity use of natural resources that would not negatively effect natural values. Management of existing facilities (e.g. roads, recreation sites, and range improvements) would continue in order to facilitate commodity uses, continued access, and availability of natural resource amenities. Alternatives would be developed, where possible, for existing facilities that negatively effect natural values; otherwise, such facilities would be eliminated.

Nonconsumptive uses would be emphasized in the AMU while providing for minimal sustainable livestock grazing that meets allotment management (natural resource) objectives, and the S&Gs (USDI 1997a). Administrative actions (e.g. season of use changes, stocking level adjustments, and exclusion of livestock from specific areas) would be emphasized to accomplish natural resource management objectives. Rangeland projects and accepted livestock management practices would be implemented when administrative actions alone would not accomplish natural resource objectives. Rangeland projects that do not promote resource values or assist in meeting management objectives would be removed, and project sites would be rehabilitated.

Approximately 212,972 acres would be open to locatable and leasable mineral exploration and development and 213,207 acres would be open to salable mineral exploration and development. The leasable land would be open with standard lease stipulations (Table 2.13.1).

All ACECs, WSAs, parcels with wilderness characteristics, WSRs,, the Steens Mountain Wilderness, and the CMPA would be designated as renewable energy authorization exclusion areas. Applications for renewable energy authorizations in the AMU would be processed on a case-by-case basis.

Public land holdings containing WSAs, ACECs, HMAs, special status species, and important cultural/historical sites, as well as those in the Steens Mountain Wilderness and the CMPA, would be retained and increased with an emphasis on acquiring land with natural or cultural values. Other lands may be acquired by purchase, donation, conservation agreements/easements, or by exchange in order to obtain lands with natural or cultural values.

All ACECs, WSAs, parcels with wilderness characteristics, WSRs, the Steens Mountain Wilderness, and the CMPA would be designated as ROW and realty use authorization exclusion areas, except those authorizations necessary to provide reasonable access to nonpublic lands and interests in land. No new communications sites would be authorized in the Planning Area. Except as noted in Section 2.17, applications for ROWs and other realty use authorizations in the AMU, including those for energy development and military uses, would be processed on a case-by-case basis.

Approximately 254,859 acres as identified in Table 2.13.1 would be recommended for withdrawal from the public land and mining laws. Access and easement acquisition management would be the same as Alternative B, except that closed roads would be actively reclaimed.

Roads that are determined not essential or that contribute to negative effects on natural resources would be closed and rehabilitated. Only existing recreation sites would be maintained. Dispersed recreation would be emphasized. An SRP allocation system would be developed for the CMPA. SRPs in the AMU would be issued to meet the demand. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated roads in approximately 90 percent of the Planning Area. The remaining ten percent would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use.

Proposed RMP

This alternative emphasizes balancing social, economic, cultural, and ecological components and using cooperative management practices. To achieve the objective, cooperative and collaborative processes, contracts, and cooperative

agreements would be made for services and products available locally when need and conditions permit. In addition, local contracts would be targeted for services to restore and maintain natural systems, while providing for sustainable tourism, production, and industry. Collaboration with local populations would be implemented to encourage a high level of natural resource protection, which contributes to tourism and attracts sustainable commodities industries. Public and private partnerships would also be created to achieve shared economic objectives within existing legal, regulatory, and administrative authorities.

Management actions would provide for sustainable livestock grazing that meets allotment management (natural resource) objectives and the S&Gs (USDI 1997a). Revision of Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) would be based on evaluations and rangeland health assessments, which would determine allowable Animal Unit Months (AUMs) and plant community management. Interim and long-term grazing management and stocking levels would be adjusted in accordance with results of monitoring studies, allotment evaluations, and rangeland health assessments.

Accepted livestock management practices would be implemented (e.g. adjustment of the timing, duration, frequency of grazing, and periodic rest or deferment). These would be supplemented by administrative actions (e.g. season of use changes, stocking level adjustments and exclusionary pastures) or rangeland projects to accomplish natural resource management objectives.

Approximately 447,464 acres would be open to locatable mineral exploration and development and 20,367 acres would be recommended for withdrawal. No acres would be closed to leasable energy and mineral exploration and development, 9,355 acres would be open with no surface occupancy (NSO), 241,683 acres would be open with seasonal and other special stipulations, and the remaining 216,793 acres would be open with standard lease stipulations (Table 2.13.1). Approximately 446,287 acres would be open to salable minerals and 22,057 acres would be closed (Table 2.13.1).

All WSRs and the Steens Mountain Wilderness would be designated as renewable energy authorization exclusion areas. All WSAs, and ACECs would be designated as renewable energy authorization avoidance areas. Applications for renewable energy authorizations in the AMU would be processed on a case-by-case basis.

Public land holdings containing WSAs, ACECs, HMAs, special status species, and important cultural/historical sites, as well as those in the Steens Mountain Wilderness and the CMPA, would be retained and increased with emphasis on acquiring lands with high public resource values. Emphasis would also be on acquisition of nonpublic lands within an ACEC, the CMPA, WSA, or proposed or designated WSRs; or of nonpublic lands containing a critical access need as identified in an approved BLM land use plan, or those containing riparian or wetland values, habitat for listed T&E species; or cultural/historical resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Corridor designations would be the same as Alternative C. All large scale facilities, as specified in Section 2.17, would be encouraged to locate in the designated corridors. All WSRs and the Steens Mountain Wilderness would be designated as ROW and realty use authorization exclusion areas, except those authorizations necessary to provide reasonable access to nonpublic lands and interests in land. All WSAs and ACECs would be designated as ROW and realty use authorization avoidance areas. Communications lease applications for new locations would be considered on a case-by-case basis and site management plans would be developed concurrent with processing applications. Except as noted in Section 2.17, applications for ROWs and other realty use authorizations in the Planning Area would be processed on a case-by-case basis.

Approximately 20,367 acres would be recommended for withdrawal from the public land and mining laws. Legal public or administrative access, including conservation and scenic easements, would be acquired where public demand or an administrative need exists, including any rights necessary to control and minimize access to areas containing sensitive resource values. Emphasis would be placed on providing access to areas containing high public values and on the protection of natural values. Land tenure transactions would be designed to maintain and improve public access. Where easement acquisition for access is not feasible or desirable but a critical access need has been identified, new roads would be constructed around nonpublic lands, subject to the limitations expressed in the Steens Act.

TPs will be written for both the AMU and the CMPA. After completion of the plans, some roads could be closed, modified or relocated to minimize resource impacts. In the AMU new roads would be constructed on a case-by-case basis when needed for management purposes. Existing roads in the Planning Area would be maintained to appropriate standards. The existing recreation sites would be maintained. New facilities or actions in the CMPA would be considered in a comprehensive recreation plan to be developed after the RMP is completed. New facilities or actions in the AMU would be considered in site specific Recreation Project Plans and EAs. SRPs would be issued to meet the demand. An SRP allocation system could be developed for the Planning Area. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited

to designated roads in approximately 88 percent of the Planning Area. Ten percent would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The remaining area, the Alvord Desert playa, would be open.

Alternative E

This alternative emphasizes commodity production while targeting services and products for competitive contracting to local firms/individuals, where legally permitted, and managing natural resources on the public lands to promote tourism, maximize production, and attract industry. In addition, existing commodities available for extraction would be advertised and public and private partnerships would be created to achieve shared economic objectives within existing legal, regulatory, and administrative authorities.

Grazing opportunities would be maximized in the AMU to the extent possible while meeting the S&Gs (USDI 1997a). Rangeland projects and accepted livestock practices would be emphasized as the preferred solution to meet natural resource management objectives. Administrative actions would be applied when structural developments or accepted livestock management practices would not accomplish natural resource management objectives.

The maximum amount of area (467,831 acres) would be open to locatable mineral exploration and development. No acres would be closed to leasable energy and mineral exploration and development; no areas would require NSO; no areas would require seasonal or other special stipulations; and the maximum amount of area would be open with standard lease stipulations. Salable minerals under this alternative would be similar to Alternative A except that no new areas would be closed to salable minerals. Approximately 468,344 acres would be open to salable minerals and no acres would be closed. Renewable energy exclusion and avoidance designations and renewable energy administration would be the same as the Proposed RMP.

Public land holdings containing WSAs, ACECs, HMAs, special status species and important cultural/historical sites, as well as those in the Steens Mountain Wilderness and the CMPA, would be maintained in their approximate current acreage. Emphasis would be on securing land containing commodity-producing values or that facilitates commodity production. Leases, permits, and other authorizations would be considered and encouraged for agricultural, occupancy, filming, and other commodity-producing land uses.

The designated corridors would include all corridors identified by the Western Regional Corridor Study, all county roads, and all federal and state highways. Otherwise, corridor management, exclusion and avoidance designations, and general ROW administration would be the same as the Proposed RMP.

No new protective withdrawals would be considered for public land. Legal public or administrative access would be acquired with emphasis on providing access to facilitate commodity production. No conservation or scenic easements would be considered. New roads would be constructed around private lands where easement acquisition is not feasible or desirable, subject to the limitations expressed in the Steens Act. Land tenure transactions would be designed to maintain and improve public access.

New roads would be constructed and existing roads upgraded on a case-by-case basis to facilitate public uses and commodity production. Recreational activities would be permitted to the fullest extent possible, while not damaging sensitive resources protected by laws and regulations. New recreation facilities would be developed to attract visitors to the area. Except where prohibited by law, policy, or regulation, the Planning Area would be open to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. SRPs would be issued to emphasize commercial, competitive, and organized group recreation activities.

Objective 2. Maintain and promote the cultural, economic, ecological, and social health of the Steens Mountain area.

Management Common to All Alternatives

The Steens Act requires that management of the CMPA accomplish the following:

1) Provide for predictable and sustainable levels of commodity outputs.
2) Meet subsistence needs of tribes and tribal communities to the greatest extent practicable.
3) Provide natural resource amenities on public lands that promote local communities as places to live, work, or visit (e.g., water quality, scenic views, recreation sites, wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing).
4) Protect special designated areas with unique natural resource values for the enjoyment of future generations (e.g., habitats of endangered species).

5) Target local economies for government business activities associated with public land management to the extent permitted by the existing authorities (procurement and contracting can be tracked through BLM records to evaluate whether local versus nonlocal government spending changes over time).

These requirements meet both objectives for Social and Economic Values.

The Steens Act dictates that no mechanized or motorized vehicles can be operated off designated roads. Outside of the Steens Mountain Wilderness, the CMPA is designated as limited to designated routes for OHV and mechanized vehicle use.

Alternative A

Under this alternative, current management mandated by the Steens Act would continue. Livestock grazing use would continue to be authorized in the CMPA consistent with the existing land use plan, the Steens Act, the S&Gs (USDI 1997a), and applicable activity plans. Minerals and land authorizations would be managed as outlined in existing land use plans and the Steens Act. Therefore, subject to valid existing rights, no mineral exploration or development would be permitted anywhere in the CMPA except at salable minerals sites identified as open for road maintenance use by the Steens Act.

Pursuant to the Steens Act, a TP for the CMPA is being written in conjunction with the development of this RMP. No new roads are to be constructed in the CMPA but routes may be modified or relocated to minimize resource impacts. Existing and new SRPs would continue to be issued. Existing recreation sites would be maintained and improved.

Alternative B

This alternative emphasizes natural process and limits commodity production to the extent required by the Steens Act. Nonconsumptive uses would be emphasized in the CMPA, with the exception that grazing would not be authorized anywhere within the planning area. Existing rangeland projects that do not function to promote resource values or assist in meeting management objectives would be removed, and project sites would be rehabilitated.

In the entire Planning Area, no locatable, leasable or salable mineral exploration or development and no renewable energy authorizations would be permitted.

Transportation is the same as for Alternative A. Only the existing recreation sites would be maintained. Many currently allowed activities would be limited or prohibited. Only the existing long-term CMPA SRPs would be authorized. No new SRPS would be issued.

Alternative C

Under this alternative, provisions of the Steens Act would continue to be enacted while emphasizing protection of the natural values of the CMPA. Nonconsumptive uses would be emphasized in the CMPA while providing for sustainable livestock grazing consistent with the Steens Act, and that also meet allotment management (natural resource) objectives and the S&Gs (USDI 1997a).

Consistent with the Steens Act, no locatable or leasable mineral exploration or development would be allowed in the CMPA. Salable minerals sites identified in the Steens Act would be open for exploration and development for road maintenance use. The CMPA would be designated as a renewable energy authorization exclusion area.

Lands within the CMPA may be disposed of only by exchange that furthers the purpose and objectives of the Steens Act. All ACECs, WSAs, parcels with wilderness characteristics, WSRs, the Steens Mountain Wilderness, and the CMPA would be designated as ROW and realty use authorization exclusion areas, except those authorizations necessary to provide reasonable access to nonpublic lands and interests in land.

Transportation is the same as for Alternative A. Only the existing recreation sites would be maintained. Dispersed recreation would be emphasized. An SRP allocation system would be developed for the CMPA.

Proposed RMP

This alternative emphasizes sustainable economic operations while protecting the ecological, social, and cultural integrity of the CMPA. Management actions would provide for and promote sustainable livestock grazing in the CMPA that is consistent with the Steens Act and that meets allotment management (natural resource) objectives and the S&Gs (USDI 1997a). Revision of AMPs would be based on evaluations and rangeland health assessments, which would determine allowable AUMs and plant community management.

Consistent with the Steens Act, no locatable or leasable mineral exploration or development would be allowed in the CMPA. Salable minerals sites identified in the Steens Act would be open for exploration and development for road maintenance use.

Transportation is the same as for Alternative A. The existing recreation sites would be maintained. New facilities or actions in the CMPA would be considered in a comprehensive recreation plan to be developed after the RMP is completed. SRPs would be issued to meet the demand. An SRP allocation system could be developed for the CMPA. Sustainable recreational activities would be promoted.

Traditional access to public lands by the Burns Paiute Tribe would be conserved, protected and promoted.

Alternative E

Under this alternative, commodity production would be provided to the maximum extent allowable under the Steens Act. Grazing opportunities would be maximized in the CMPA consistent with the Steens Act, and to the extent that is possible while meeting the S&Gs (USDI 1997a).

Consistent with the Steens Act, no locatable or leasable mineral exploration or development would be allowed in the CMPA. Salable minerals sites identified in the Steens Act would be open for exploration and development for road maintenance use.

Transportation is the same as for Alternative A. New recreation facilities would be developed to attract visitors to the area. SRPs would be issued to emphasize commercial, competitive, and organized group recreation activities.

2.12.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.13 Energy and Minerals

For renewable energy permitting, see Lands and Realty at Section 2.17. The primary form of authorization for wind and solar energy development is a ROW or other realty use authorization.

In the RMP process, BLM administered lands are recommended for locatable mineral withdrawal, leasable mineral leasing categories, and are closed to salable minerals activities across management alternatives depending on resource values that conflict with exploration and development of mineral resources in a culturally and environmentally sound manner. The authority for mineral withdrawal rests with the Secretary of the Interior. Congressional notification is required for non-military withdrawals exceeding 5,000 acres. It is USDI policy (DM603 1976) that withdrawals of land shall be kept to a minimum; therefore, under the Proposed RMP the resource identified for withdrawal are kept to a minimum.

Part of the Planning Area is already Congressionally withdrawn. This includes BLM administered land within the Mineral Withdrawal Area, the Steens Mountain Wilderness and WSRs. Split estate land with nonfederal surface estate and federal mineral estate is not analyzed across the management alternatives because the nonfederal surface is not public land subject to the planning and management requirements of the FLPMA. Split estate land with federal surface and nonfederal minerals is not analyzed for mineral withdrawal because the minerals are nonfederal.

Energy and minerals uses in WSAs are not analyzed in the Proposed RMP/FEIS. WSAs are open to mining claim location but are subject to the WSA IMP, including the nonimpairment criteria. Those criteria close WSAs to locatable mineral activities under a notice or plan of operations and to leasable and salable minerals activities unless they are grandfathered.

Consistent with the Steens Act, this Proposed RMP/FEIS analyzes 467,831 acres of BLM administered land for locatable and leasable minerals and 468,344 acres of BLM administered land for salable minerals. Table 2.13.1 summarizes the acres recommended closed (withdrawn) and open for locatable, leasable and salable minerals activities across the management alternatives. Table 2.13.2 shows mineral leasing stipulations and their exceptions, modifications, and waivers. Table 2.13.3 shows a summary comparison of acreages by resource values recommended closed across the management alternatives.

Table 2.13.1: Acres of Mineral Restrictions Within Areas of High Mineral Potential, by Alternative[1]

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Proposed RMP	Alternative E
LOCATABLE MINERALS					
Total available BLM administered acres in the Planning Area[2]	467,831	467,831	467,831	467,831	467,831
Total Closed acres in the Planning Area[3]	0	467,831	254,859	20,367	0
Total Open acres in the Planning Area	467,831	0	212,972	447,464	467,831
Total available BLM administered acres with high potential for hot springs gold and mercury	32,055	32,055	32,055	32,055	32,055
Closed	0	32,055	24,911	8,005	0
Open	32,055	0	7,144	24,050	32,055
Total available BLM administered acres with high potential for uranium	0	0	0	0	0
Total available BLM administered acres with high potential for vein gold	0	0	0	0	0
Total available BLM administered acres with high potential for porphyry copper, gold and molybdenum	1,313	1,313	1,313	1,313	1,313
Closed	0	1,313	1,294	10	0
Open	1,313	0	19	1,303	1,313
Total available BLM administered acres with high potential for diatomite	1	1	1	1	1
Closed	0	1	1	1	0
Open	1	0	0	0	1
LEASABLE MINERALS					
Total available BLM administered acres in the Planning Area	467,831	467,831	467,831	467,831	467,831
Total Closed acres in the Planning Area	0	467,831	254,859	0	0
Total Open with NSO in the Planning Area	0	0	0	9,355	0
Total Open with Special Stipulations in the Planning Area	0	0	0	241,683	0
Total Open with Standard Stipulations in the Planning Area	467,831	0	212,972	216,793	467,831
Total available BLM administered acres in the Planning Area with high potential for oil and gas resources	0	0	0	0	0
Total available BLM administered acres in the Planning Area with high potential for geothermal resources	332	332	332	332	332
Closed	0	332	289	0	0
Open with NSO	0	0	0	0	0

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Proposed RMP	Alternative E
Open with Special Stipulations	0	0	0	281	0
Open with Standard Lease Stipulations	332	0	43	51	332
Total available BLM administered acres in the Planning Area with high potential for sodium or potassium mineral resources	0	0	0	0	0
SALABLE MINERALS					
Total available BLM administered acres in the Planning Area[4]	468,344	468,344	468,344	468,344	468,344
Closed acres in the Planning Area	0	468,344	255,137	22,057	0
Open acres in the Planning Area	468,344	0	213,207	446,287	468,344

[1] These acreages are for areas of Public Land only; surface and mineral estates are both under BLM administration:
Total Planning Area = 1,649,470 acres
Mineral Withdrawal Area (includes some WSAs, all WSRs and all Steens Mountain Wilderness) = 748,118 acres
All other WSAs (outside of the Mineral Withdrawal Area) = 433,521 acres
Not Available due to Congressional withdrawal and the WSA IMP, including the nonimpairment criteria (Mineral Withdrawal Area, WSAs, WSRs, and the Steens Mountain Wilderness) = 1,181,639 acres

[2] Total available BLM administered acres in the Planning Area: 1,649,470 acres - 1,181,639 acres = 467,831 acres

[3] Total Closed acres in the Planning Area means acres recommended for withdrawal from locatable mining laws and closed to leasing and salable minerals activities through the RMP process.

[4] Total available BLM administered acres in the Planning Area for salable minerals includes 513 acres within the Mineral Withdrawal Area identified as open for road maintenance use by the Steens Act.

2.13.1 Goal 1 - Provide opportunities for the exploration and development of locatable minerals in a culturally- and environmentally-sound manner.

2.13.1.1 Management Framework

The General Mining Law of 1872 gives the public the basic right to explore and locate mining claims on public land. Section 102 of the FLPMA directs that the public land be managed in a manner that recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals and other resources. BLM regulations for locatable minerals management on Public Land are at 43 CFR 3802 for Wilderness and WSAs; 43 CFR 3809 for public land; and 43 CFR 3715 for mining-related use and occupancy. The Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970 declares that it is the continuing policy of the federal government to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of domestic mineral resources. BLM mineral policy (1984) states that public lands shall remain open and available for mineral exploration and development unless withdrawal or other administrative action is clearly justified in the national interest.

2.13.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Identify land with federal mineral estate available to locatable mineral exploration and development.

Alternative A

Management of locatable mineral exploration and development would continue on lands currently open to locatable mineral activity consistent with laws, regulations, and policy, and no additional withdrawals would be proposed. Under the Andrews MFP, no mineral withdrawals were proposed. Since the MFP was written, some land was withdrawn from locatable mineral exploration and development by Congressional action and subject to nonimpairment criteria of the WSA IMP.

Approximately 467,831 acres would be open to locatable mineral exploration and development under a notice or plan of operations and no acres would be closed (Table 2.13.1).

Alternative B

The federal mineral estate in the entire Planning Area would be recommended for withdrawal (closed) to locatable mineral entry, subject to valid existing rights. Since the withdrawal would exceed 5,000 acres, Congressional notification

would be required. No acres would be open to locatable mineral exploration and development under a notice or plan of operations and approximately 467,831 acres would be closed (Table 2.13.1).

Alternative C

This alternative emphasizes protection of natural values. The following areas would be recommended for withdrawal from mineral exploration and development: all ACECs; existing BLM recreation and administrative sites; potential BLM recreation sites when development is approved; National Register eligible or listed cultural sites; significant paleontological localities; big game winter range; areas containing special status species and their habitats (which include federally-listed species and their designated critical habitat); and within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks. Under this alternative, approximately 212,972 acres would be open to locatable mineral exploration and development under a notice or plan of operations and 254,859 acres would be closed (Table 2.13.1).

Under this alternative, Long Draw ACEC, Pueblo Foothills ACEC, East Fork Trout Creek ACEC, Picket Rim ACEC and Tum Tum Lake ACEC (see Table 2.21.2) would be recommended for withdrawal. See Appendix K for relevant and important values in specific ACECs and Section 3.13.1 for more information on minerals management in ACECs and WSAs.

Proposed RMP

Areas recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral exploration and development are existing BLM recreation and administrative sites; potential BLM recreation sites when development is approved; National Register listed cultural sites; significant paleontological localities; areas containing federally listed species and their designated critical habitat; and within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks. Approximately 447,464 acres would be open to locatable mineral exploration and development under a notice or plan of operations and 20,367 acres would be closed (Table 2.13.1 and Map 2.13.1).

Under this alternative, Tum Tum Lake ACEC is the only ACEC located outside of the Mineral Withdrawal Area and outside of WSAs that would be open to locatable mineral exploration and development under a notice or plan of operations (see Table 2.21.2). See Appendix K for relevant and important values in Tum Tum Lake ACEC and Section 3.13.1 for more information on minerals management in ACECs and WSAs.

Alternative E

No new areas would be recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral exploration and development so that the maximum amount of land would be available. This is similar to Alternative A. Approximately 467,831 acres outside of the Mineral Withdrawal Area would be open to locatable mineral exploration and development (Table 2.13.1).

2.13.2 Goal 2 - Provide opportunities for the leasing and development of oil and gas, geothermal, and solid leasable mineral resources in a culturally- and environmentally-sound manner.

2.13.2.1 Management Framework

The continuing policy of the federal government is to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of domestic mineral resources, as declared in the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended; the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, as amended; and the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970. Section 102 of the FLPMA directs that the public land be managed in a manner that recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of mineral and other resources. The BLM regulations for leasable minerals management are at 43 CFR 3100 for oil and gas resources, 43 CFR 3200 for geothermal resources, and 43 CFR 3500 for solid mineral leasing. BLM mineral policy (1984) states that public lands shall remain open and available for mineral exploration and development unless withdrawn or unless other administrative action is clearly justified in the national interest.

The leasing category of each area with federal mineral estate is determined by resources present on the surface and identification of the least restrictive leasing category that would protect those resources. Leasing and development decisions also apply to geophysical exploration. From most restrictive to least restrictive, the leasing categories that must be identified for areas within the Planning Area are as follows: (1) closed to leasing or no leasing, (2) open with NSO, (3) open with seasonal or other special stipulations or both, and (4) open with standard stipulations (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1). Table 2.13.1 shows acres that would be closed (recommended for withdrawal as a

Table 2.13.2: Mineral Leasing Management

Resource of Concern	Applicable Closed Area	Alternative	Acres	Description
Closed to Leasing (nondiscretionary closures)				
Mineral Withdrawal Area	See leasing maps	A,B,C,PRMP, E	748,118	Includes some WSAs, all WSRs and all Steens Mountain Wilderness
WSAs outside of the Mineral Withdrawal Area	See leasing maps	A,B,C,PRMP, E	433,521	
Closed to Leasing (discretionary closures)				
ACEC values	Tum Tum Lake ACEC, Picket Rim ACEC	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 5,633 0 0	See Table 2.21.1 for relevant and important values in these ACECs. No leasing is allowed within the specific ACEC (Tum Tum Lake or Picket Rim) unless the values for which the ACEC was designated no longer exist and the ACEC designation is removed through an amendment to this plan. In Alternative C proactive protection of natural values is emphasized and considered a better benefit to the public than leasable mineral exploration and development.
Existing recreation and administrative sites and approved potential recreation sites	Fields Admin Site, other sites when approved	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 5 0 0	Sites are valuable for investments in structures, one-of-a-kind location, and steady use for recreation or administration. No leasing is allowed within these sites unless the investment in the facility or site is compensated, the site can be relocated to an acceptable location, and the location is revised in an amendment to this plan. In Alternative C proactive protection of natural values is emphasized and considered a better benefit to the public than leasable mineral exploration and development.
National Register eligible or listed cultural sites	Unnamed at request of Burns Paiute Tribe, other sites when eligible or listed	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 200 0 0	No leasing is allowed within these specific sites unless the values for which they are eligible or listed no longer exist, designation is removed after consultation with tribes, and the site areas are revised in an RMP amendment. In Alternative C proactive protection of natural values is emphasized and considered a better benefit to the public than leasable mineral exploration and development.

Resource of Concern	Applicable Closed Area	Alternative	Acres	Description
Significant paleontological localities	Unnamed at request of BLM archaeologist	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 9,352 0 0	These sites contain mammal fossils or other rare fossils. No leasing is allowed unless research determines that the locality area has changed in size and the BLM archaeologist revises the locality outline in BLM records and in an amendment to this RMP. In Alternative C proactive protection of natural values is emphasized and considered a better benefit to the public than leasable mineral exploration and development.
Big game winter range (elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and big horn sheep range)	Sites shown on Map 3.6.1	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 245,213 0 0	Human disturbances can be detrimental to big game that are already under normal thermal and dietary stresses, and can contribute to fetal losses in pregnant does as well as mortality in adults. No leasing is allowed unless the areas of big game range change and range designation is removed through an amendment to this RMP. In Alternative C proactive protection of natural values is emphasized and considered a better benefit to the public than leasable mineral exploration and development.
Areas containing special status species and their habitat, including federally listed species and their critical habitat	Lahontan trout Special status plants Bighorn sheep range Raptor areas	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 41,398 0 0	Human disturbances can be detrimental to special status species and their habitat that are already under normal environmental stresses. No leasing is allowed unless the area no longer contains a special status species due to recovery or extinction, or the area is no longer its habitat, and the area is opened through an amendment to this RMP. In Alternative C proactive protection of natural values is emphasized and considered a better benefit to the public than leasable mineral exploration and development.
Within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks	Areas shown on Map 3.6.1	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 20,372 0 0	Human disturbances can be detrimental to sage-grouse breeding and nesting activities. No leasing is allowed within 0.6 mile of a sage-grouse lek unless an area is recognized in an RMP amendment as no longer in use as a sage-grouse lek. In Alternative C proactive protection of natural values is emphasized and considered a better benefit to the public than leasable mineral exploration and development.

Resource of Concern	Applicable Closed Area	Alternative	Acres	Description
Designated for NSO				
National Register listed cultural sites	Unnamed at request of Burns Paiute Tribe	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 0 0 0	Cultural values are rare if they are listed on the National Register. Standard stipulations would not provide sufficient protection if the site is extensive. There are currently no Natural Register listed cultural sites in the Planning Area although sites may be listed in the future. Exception: None Modification: The authorized officer may modify the size of the stipulation area if a listed area is increased or decreased due to research. Waiver: The authorized officer may waive the stipulation if the listed area is small or reduced in size so that area can be avoided under standard stipulations.
Significant paleontological localities	Unnamed at request of BLM archaeologist	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 0 9,352 0	Significant paleontological localities have mammal fossils or other rare fossils. Standard stipulations do not provide sufficient protection if the site is extensive. Exception: None Modification: The authorized officer may modify the size of a stipulation area if a significant paleontological locality area is increased or decreased due to research. Waiver: The authorized officer may waive the stipulation if the locality is small or reduced in size so that the area can be avoided under standard stipulations.
Designated for seasonal or other special stipulations or both				
Big game winter range (elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and big horn sheep range	Sites shown on Map 3.6.1	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 0 245,213 0	Big game tolerance to exploration and development activities varies by species and is influenced by the intensity, duration and timing of human disturbance. Winter season disturbances can be particularly detrimental to big game that are already under normal thermal and dietary stresses. When added to winter environmental stress, human activity can result in fetal losses in pregnant does as well as mortality in adults. In areas with big game range, no leasing activities would be allowed from December 1 - April 1 of each year. Exception: The authorized officer may grant an exception if site-specific environmental analysis indicates that an action would not interfere with habitat function or compromise animal condition. Modification: The authorized officer may modify the area and

Resource of Concern	Applicable Closed Area	Alternative	Acres	Description
				timeframes of the stipulation if monitoring indicates that current animal use patterns are inconsistent with areas and dates established for animal occupation. Waiver: This stipulation may be waived by the authorized officer if monitoring determines that all or specific portions of the Planning Area no longer serve as big game winter range.
Areas containing federally listed species and their designated critical habitat	Lahontan trout, other sites when listed	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 0 12.7 0	Surface disturbing activities on all mineral leases are limited to existing roads until field surveys of the proposed area of disturbance is completed. These field surveys must be conducted at an appropriate time of year to enable the identification of federally listed species and their designated critical habitat. If federally listed species or their designated critical habitat are found or known to be in the area, the authorized officer may determine to not allow or to modify activities as needed. Exception: None Modification: The authorized officer may modify the size of the stipulation area if conference or consultation changes the area of designated critical habitat. Waiver: This stipulation may be waived by the authorized officer when the species is recovered or extinct, or when the habitat is no longer considered critical.
Within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks	Areas shown on Map 3.6.1	A B C PRMP E	0 All is closed 0 20,372 0	Sage-grouse breeding and nesting activity could be disrupted by lease activities during the strutting season. NSO is allowed within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks between March 1 - June 1 of each year. Exception: None Modification: The authorized officer may modify the size of the stipulation area or timing if monitoring indicates that current animal use patterns are inconsistent with areas previously considered established as sage-grouse leks. Waiver: This stipulation may be waived by the authorized officer if monitoring determines that all or specific portions of the Planning Area no longer serve as sage-grouse leks.

Maps showing areas in the various leasing categories are Map 2.13.2 and supplemental maps available from the Burns DO.
Leasing and development decisions also apply to geophysical exploration.
Under Alternative B the entire Planning Area is recommended for withdrawal (closed).
Changes requiring an RMP plan amendment will have a 30-day public review.
Acreages of some resources overlap with acreages of other resources (an area may have both special status plant species and big game winter range, for example) and so the acreage shows up under each resource; in the leasing maps and in Table 2.13.1 the overlap acreage is not shown or counted twice.

Table 2.13.3: Summary Comparison of Alternatives in Acres

Mineral Category and Resource	Acreage				
	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Proposed RMP	Alternative E
Leasable Minerals Closed					
ACECs	0	All is closed	5,633	0	0
Existing recreation and administrative sites and approved potential recreation sites	0	All is closed	5	0	0
National Register eligible or listed cultural sites	0	All is closed	200	0	0
Significant paleontological localities	0	All is closed	9,352	0	0
Big game winter range (elk, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope) and yearlong big game range (California bighorn sheep)	0	All is closed	245,213	0	0
Areas containing special status species and their habitat, including federally listed species and their critical habitat	0	All is closed	41,398	0	0
Within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks	0	All is closed	20,372	0	0
NSO					
National Register listed cultural sites	0	All is closed	0	0	0
Significant paleontological localities	0	All is closed	0	9,352	0
Seasonal or other special stipulations or both. Big game winter range (elk, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope) and yearlong big game range (California bighorn sheep)	0	All is closed	0	245,213	0
Areas containing federally listed species and their designated critical habitat	0	All is closed	0	12.7	0
Within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks	0	All is closed	0	20,372	0

Mineral Category and Resource	Acreage				
	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Proposed RMP	Alternative E
Locatable Minerals					
Closed					
ACECs	0	All is closed	8,856	0	0
Existing recreation and administrative sites and approved potential recreation sites	0	All is closed	5	5	0
National Register eligible cultural sites	0	All is closed	200	0	0
National Register listed cultural sites	0	All is closed	0	0	0
Significant paleontological localities	0	All is closed	9,352	9,352	0
Big game winter range	0	All is closed	245,213	0	0
Areas containing special status species and their habitat, including federally listed species and their designated critical habitat	0	All is closed	41,398	0	0
Areas containing federally listed species and their designated critical habitat	0	All is closed	12.7	12.7	0
Within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks	0	All is closed	20,372	20,372	0
Salable Minerals					
Closed					
ACECs	0	All is closed	5,633	1,689	0
Existing recreation and administrative sites and approved potential recreation sites	0	All is closed	5	5	0
National Register eligible cultural sites	0	All is closed	200	0	0
National Register listed cultural sites	0	All is closed	0	0	0
Significant paleontological localities	0	All is closed	9,352	9,352	0
Areas containing special status species and their habitat, including federally listed species and the designated critical habitat	0	All is closed	41,398	0	0
Areas containing federally listed species and their designated critical habitat	0	All is closed	12.7	12.7	0
Within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks	0	All is closed	20,372	20,372	0

Acreages of some resources overlap with acreages of other resources (an area may have both special status plant species and big game winter range, for example) and so the acreage shows up under each resource; in the minerals maps and in Table 2.13.1 the overlap acreage is not shown or counted twice. discretionary action), open with NSO, open with seasonal or other special stipulations or both, and open with standard stipulations under each management alternative. Table 2.13.2 shows areas closed to leasing that are nondiscretionary, areas closed to leasing that are discretionary, and stipulations that would be attached to leases in areas open to leasing under each management alternative.

2.13.2.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Identify leasing categories for the land.

Alternative A

Under the Andrews MFP, no leasable energy and mineral withdrawals were proposed. Later, some land was closed to leasable mineral exploration and development by Congressional action and through the WSA IMP. Consistent with the Andrews MFP, Steens Act, and WSA IMP, no new areas would be closed to leasing under this alternative and approximately 467,831 acres would be open to leasing under standard leasing stipulations until publicly reviewed environmental analysis prior to leasing indicates otherwise (Table 2.13.1). Areas of NSO would be identified prior to leasing in a publicly reviewed environmental analysis in order to protect those areas where natural values would be impaired by surface disturbance. Areas would be designated for seasonal or other special stipulations or both in a publicly reviewed environmental analysis prior to leasing in order to protect areas where natural values would be impaired by seasonal or other special leasing activities. No new lease sales are planned until after completion of the Final RMP/ROD.

Alternative B

The federal mineral estate in the entire Planning Area would be recommended for withdrawal (closed) to leasable energy and mineral exploration and development. Approximately 467,831 acres beyond those already closed by Congressional action and WSA IMP would be closed to energy and mineral leasing (Table 2.13.1).

Alternative C

This alternative emphasizes protection of natural values. Areas that would be recommended for withdrawal (closed) to leasable energy and mineral exploration and development include all ACECs; existing BLM recreation and administrative sites; potential BLM recreation sites when development is approved; National Register eligible or listed cultural sites; significant paleontological localities; big game winter range; areas containing special status species and their habitat (which include areas containing federally-listed species and their designated critical habitat); and within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks.

Approximately 254,859 acres would be closed to leasable energy and mineral exploration and development, in addition to those areas already closed by Congressional action and the WSA IMP. No acres would be subject to NSO or seasonal or other special stipulations. Approximately 212,972 acres would be open to leasing under standard leasing stipulations (Table 2.13.1).

ACECs in the Planning Area are within the Mineral Withdrawal Area and are already withdrawn from leasable energy and mineral exploration and development or are in WSAs and subject to no leasing under the WSA IMP, with the exception of Picket Rim ACEC and Tum Tum Lake ACEC. See Section 3.13.1 for more information on minerals management in ACECs and WSAs. See Appendix K for relevant and important values in Picket Rim ACEC and Tum Tum Lake ACEC.

Proposed RMP

No new areas would be closed to leasing. Areas of NSO would include National Register listed cultural sites and significant paleontological localities. Areas of seasonal or special stipulations would include big game winter range, areas containing federally listed species and their designated critical habitat, and within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks.

No acres would be closed to leasable energy and mineral exploration and development beyond those areas already closed by Congressional action and WSA IMP. Approximately 9,355 acres would be subject to NSO stipulations.

Approximately 241,683 acres would be subject to seasonal or other special stipulations or both. Approximately 216,793 acres would be open to leasing under standard leasing stipulations (Table 2.13.1 and Map 2.13.2).

Most of the ACECs in the Planning Area are within the Mineral Withdrawal Area and are already withdrawn from leasable energy and mineral exploration and development or are in WSAs and subject to no leasing under the WSA IMP. Under this alternative, Tum Tum Lake ACEC is the only ACEC located outside of the Mineral Withdrawal Area and outside of WSAs that would be open to leasing, and it would be open under standard lease stipulations except where it contains values listed for NSO or seasonal or other special stipulations under this alternative. Map 2.13.2 shows that the Tum Tum Lake ACEC area is open with seasonal or other special stipulations, and that is because it is within deer winter range. See Section 3.13 for more information on minerals management in ACECs and WSAs. See Appendix K for relevant and important values in Tum Tum Lake ACEC.

Alternative E

No new areas would be closed to leasing under this alternative. All areas would be available for surface occupancy except as restricted by laws and regulations. No seasonal or other special stipulations would be applied except as required by laws and regulations.

No acres would be closed to leasable energy and mineral exploration beyond those areas closed by Congressional action and WSA IMP. No acres would be subject to NSO stipulations. No acres would be subject to seasonal or other special stipulations. Approximately 467,831 acres would be open to leasing under standard leasing stipulations (Table 2.13.1).

2.13.3 Goal 3 - Provide opportunities for the production of salable minerals by local, state, and federal agencies and the public in a culturally- and environmentally-sound manner.

2.13.3.1 Management Framework

The Materials Act of 1947, as amended, authorized the disposal of mineral materials such as sand and gravel. Section 102 of the FLPMA directs that public land would be managed in a manner that recognizes the nation's need for minerals and other resources. BLM regulations for salable minerals management on federal mineral estate are at 43 CFR 3600. The Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970 declares that the continuing policy of the federal government is to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of domestic mineral resources. BLM mineral policy (1984) states that public land shall remain open and available for mineral exploration and development unless withdrawal or other administrative action is clearly justified in the national interest. The BLM Mineral Materials Manual states that it is BLM policy to dispose of mineral materials provided that adequate measures are taken to protect the environment and damage to public health and safety is minimized.

Development of salable minerals on open BLM administered land and determination of site-specific mitigation measures are discretionary decisions that are made on a case-by-case basis subject to the judgement and final decision of the BLM authorized officer (Andrews Field Manager).

2.13.3.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Permit development of mineral materials sources on a case-by-case basis in areas where development does not conflict with other resource values.

Alternative A

Salable minerals removal would be permitted throughout the Planning Area on a case-by-case basis except where it is already closed by Congressional action and the WSA IMP. Salable mineral materials would be removed from existing sources, and from new sources identified in areas open to salable minerals. Approximately 468,344 acres would be open to salable minerals development (Table 2.13.1).

Alternative B

The federal mineral estate in the entire Planning Area would be closed to salable minerals development. Approximately 468,344 acres beyond those already closed by Congressional action and the WSA IMP would be closed to salable

minerals, except where required by law or where essential to protect human safety such as road construction under critical or emergency conditions (Table 2.13.1).

Alternative C

Permit salable minerals development throughout the Planning Area on a case-by-case basis except on land already closed by Congressional action or the WSA IMP; in any ACECs; existing BLM administrative and recreation sites; potential BLM recreation sites; National Register eligible or listed cultural sites; significant paleontological localities; areas containing special status species and their habitat (which include areas containing federally-listed species and their designated critical habitat); and within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks.

Under this alternative, which emphasizes protection of natural values, approximately 213,207 acres would be open to salable minerals development and 255,137 acres would be closed (Table 2.13.1).

Most of the ACECs in the Planning Area are within the Mineral Withdrawal Area and are already withdrawn from salable minerals development or are in WSAs and closed to salable minerals activities under the WSA IMP. Under this alternative, Picket Rim ACEC and Tum Tum Lake ACEC would be closed to salable minerals development. See Section 3.13 for more information on minerals management in ACECs and WSAs.

Proposed RMP

Salable minerals development would be permitted throughout the Planning Area on a case-by-case basis except on land already closed by Congressional action and the WSA IMP; in any ACECs; existing BLM administrative and recreation sites; potential BLM recreation sites; National Register listed cultural sites; significant paleontological localities; areas containing federally listed species and their designated critical habitat; and within 0.6 mile of sage-grouse leks.

Under this alternative, approximately 446,287 acres would be open to salable minerals and 22,057 acres would be closed (Table 2.13.1and Map 2.13.3).

ACECs in the Planning Area are within the Mineral Withdrawal Area and are already withdrawn from salable minerals development or are in WSAs and closed to salable minerals activities under the WSA IMP with the exception of Tum Tum Lake ACEC. Under this alternative, Tum Tum Lake ACEC would be closed to salable minerals development. See Section 3.13.1 for more information on minerals management in ACECs and WSAs.

Alternative E

Salable minerals disposal under this alternative would be similar to Alternative A except that no new areas would be closed to salable minerals other than those already closed by Congressional action and WSA IMP. Approximately 468,344 acres would be open to salable minerals development and no acres would be closed (Table 2.13.1).

2.13.4 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.14 Wild Horses and Burros

2.14.1 Goal – Manage and maintain healthy wild horse herds in established HMAs at AMLs to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance between wild horse populations, wildlife, livestock, vegetation resources, and other resource values. Enhance and perpetuate the special or rare and unique characteristics that distinguish the respective herds.

2.14.1.1 Management Framework

The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, as amended, requires the BLM to protect and manage wild horses in areas where they were found at the time this act was passed, and in a manner designed to achieve and maintain a thriving ecological balance in keeping with the public land multiple use concept. BLM policy regulations direct that wild horses shall be managed as self-sustaining populations of healthy animals. The physical traits of members of various herds are historic characteristics and are desirable to retain and maintain.

2.14.1.2 Management Direction by Alternatives

Objective 1. Designate/Retain/Adjust Herd Management Areas.

Alternative A

The existing HMAs would be retained (see Table 2.14.1).

Alternatives B and C

The existing HMAs would be retained, except for the following modifications: the Alvord-Tule Springs HMA (Burns District) would be combined with the Coyote Lake HMA (Vale District) and managed under the guidelines and decisions of the SEORMP (USDI 2002); the Kiger HMA would be reduced in acreage and its boundary changed to reflect the legislated Steens land exchanges; the South Steens HMA would be reduced in acreage and its boundary changed to reflect the legislated Steens land exchanges and the removal of the Ankle Creek Basin portion of the "No Livestock Grazing Area" (see and Table 2.14.1).

Proposed RMP

The existing HMAs would be retained, except for the following modifications: the Alvord-Tule Springs HMA (Burns District) would be combined with the Coyote Lake HMA (Vale District) and managed under the guidelines and decisions of the SEORMP (USDI 2002); the Kiger HMA would be reduced in acreage and its boundary changed to reflect the legislated Steens land exchanges; the South Steens HMA would be reduced in acreage and its boundary changed to reflect the legislated Steens land exchanges (see Map 2.14.1and Table 2.14.1).

Alternative E

The existing HMAs would be retained, except for the following modifications; the Alvord-Tule Springs HMA (Burns District) would be combined with the Coyote Lake HMA (Vale District) and managed under the guidelines and decisions of the SEORMP (USDI 2002); the Kiger HMA would be reduced in acreage and its boundary changed to reflect the legislated Steens land exchanges; the net size of the South Steens HMA would be increased and its boundary changed to reflect the addition of a portion of the No livestock Grazing Area known as the Dry Creek and Big Springs Pastures of the Fish Creek-Big Indian Allotment (#06003), the addition of that part of the South Steens Herd Area that includes Serrano Point Allotment (#6019), Carlson Creek Allotment (#6027), and Bone Creek and Miners Field pastures in the Alvord Peak Allotment (#6038), and the loss of public land acreage due to the legislated Steens land exchanges (see Table 2.14.1).

Objective 2. Designate/Retain/Adjust Herd Areas in inactive status.

Alternative A

Retain all of two Herd Areas and a portion of a third Herd Area in inactive status (see Table 2.14.2).

Alternatives B and C

All of two Herd Areas in inactive status would be retained. A portion of the Kiger Herd Area would be designated inactive to reflect the loss of public land resulting from the Steens land exchanges. The inactive portion of the South Steens Herd Area would be increased in size to reflect the addition of the Ankle Creek Basin Portion of the No Livestock Grazing Area and the changes in land ownership resulting from the Steens land exchanges (see Table 2.14.2).

Proposed RMP

All of two Herd Areas in inactive status would be retained. A portion of the Kiger Herd Area would be designated inactive to reflect the loss of public land resulting from the Steens land exchanges. The inactive portion of the South Steens Herd Area would be increased in size to reflect the changes in land ownership resulting from the Steens land exchanges (see Map 2.14.1 and Table 2.14.2).

Alternative E

All of two Herd Areas in inactive status would be retained. A portion of the Kiger Herd Area would be designated inactive to reflect the loss of public land resulting from the Steens land exchanges. The inactive portion of the South Steens Herd Area would be decreased in size to reflect the increase of the South Steens HMA to include the Serrano Point Allotment (#6019), Carlson Creek Allotment (#6027), and Bone Creek and Miners Field pastures in the Alvord Peak Allotment (#6038) as well as to reflect the change in land ownership resulting from the legislated Steens land exchange (see Table 2.14.2).

Objective 3. Maintain/Adjust AMLs and yearlong forage allocations for each HMA.

Alternative A

The current AMLs and wild horse forage allocations would be maintained in all HMAs (see Table 3.14.1).

Proposed RMP and Alternatives B, C, and E

The current AMLs and wild horse forage allocations would be maintained in all HMAs (See Table 3.14.1). Permanent increases or decreases in AML and forage allocations would be considered if the analysis of monitoring data indicates changes in long-term forage availability.

Objective 4. Maintain a thriving natural ecological balance within HMAs.

Alternative A

Wild horses would be periodically gathered and removed based on rangeland monitoring studies, climatic conditions, census data, and the occurrence of catastrophic events such as wildland fire and drought. Wild horse numbers would be reduced to the low end of the AML range when gathering is conducted.

HMA perimeter fences would be maintained. Any wild horses that stray outside HMA boundaries would be removed or returned to the HMA. Gates in interior pasture division fences would be managed and modified, if necessary, to maximize horse access to the HMA.

Table 2.14.1: Wild Horse Herd Management Area Acres by Alternative

Total Acres of Public Lands					
HMA	**Alternative A**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Proposed RMP**	**Alternative E**
Alvord-Tule Springs-Coyote Lake	343,201	556,981	556,981	556,981	556,981
Heath Creek/ Sheepshead	62,427	198,843	198,843	198,843	198,843
Kiger	38,359	26,873	26,873	26,873	26,873
Riddle Mountain	28,346	28,346	28,346	28,346	28,346
South Steens	127,838	102,343	102,343	126,732	182,485
Total	**600,171**	**913,387**	**913,387**	**937,775**	**993,528**

Table 2.14.2: Wild Horse Herd Area Acres in Inactive Status by Alternatives

Total Acres of Public Lands					
Herd Area	**Alternative A**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Proposed RMP**	**Alternative E**
Kiger	0	157	157	157	157
Pueblo-Lone Mountain	233,084	233,084	233,084	233,084	233,084
South Catlow	42,078	42,078	42,078	42,078	42,078
South Steens	58,947	84,444	84,444	60,055	15,983
Total	**334,109**	**359,763**	**359,763**	**335,374**	**291,302**

Proposed RMP and Alternatives B, C, and E

Wild horse numbers would be managed through gathering, removal, and other approved methods of population control. The initiation of gathering or other methods of population control would be based on census data, herd health, rangeland health, and productivity, as determined by rangeland monitoring studies, as well as climatic condition, and the occurrence of catastrophic events such as wildland fire and drought. Wild horse numbers would normally be reduced to the low end of the AML range when gatherings are conducted.

Perimeter fences would be maintained. Any wild horses that stray outside HMA boundaries would be removed or returned to the HMA. Gates in interior pasture division fences would be managed and modified, if necessary, to maximize horse access to the HMA.

Objective 5. Maintain/Improve year-round water sources to sustain wild horse herds.

Alternative A

Water sources that are critical to wild horses would be maintained.

Alternatives B and C

Management would maintain water sources that are critical to wild horses; develop additional water sources in areas where greater animal distribution would benefit natural processes and values and where water is lacking during periods of drought; and acquire legal access to private water sources that are critical to wild horses.

Proposed RMP

Management would maintain water sources that are critical to wild horses; develop additional water sources to improve animal distribution and provide more stable water sources during periods of drought; and seek cooperative management agreements for access to or acquire legal access to private water sources that are critical to wild horses.

Alternative E

Management would maintain water sources that are critical to wild horses and develop additional water sources to improve animal distribution and provide water during periods of drought.

Objective 6. Maintain herd viability, genetic diversity, and the genetic and physical characteristics that distinguish individual herds.

Alternative A

A 50:50 male/female sex ratio and a diverse age structure would be maintained. New animals would occasionally be introduced to small herds to maintain genetic diversity.

Wild horses returned to the HMA after a gather and those introduced from other HMAs would possess characteristics representative of the herd's conformation, size, unique markings, and color.

Proposed RMP and Alternatives B, C, and E

A diverse age structure and sex ratios ranging from 40 to 50 percent female and 50 to 60 percent male would be maintained. Wild horses returned to the HMA after a gather would possess representative characteristics of the herd's conformation, size, color, and unique markings. New animals from other HMAs would be introduced when needed to increase the diversity of the genome or maintain the herds' characteristics.

2.14.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.15 Grazing Management

2.15.1 Goal - Manage for a sustained level of livestock grazing while maintaining healthy public land resources.

2.15.1.1 Management Framework

The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 provides the basic legislative authority for livestock grazing on public lands, with provisions for protection of the lands from degradation and for orderly use and improvement of public rangelands. The Taylor Grazing Act established a system for the allotment of grazing privileges to livestock operators based on grazing capacity and use priority, and for the delineation of allotment boundaries. It also established standards for rangeland improvements and implemented grazing fees. Approximately 142 million acres of land in the western United States were placed under the jurisdiction of the Grazing Service, which became the BLM in 1946. The FLPMA and PRIA mandate the management of public land for multiple use and sustained yield. Specifically, the regulations implementing these acts call for rangeland management strategies that provide forage for economic use as well as for the maintenance or restoration of watershed function, nutrient cycling, water quality, and habitat quality for special status species and native plants and animals. These management strategies have been supported and implemented by the development of national policies and the S&Gs. The five specific applicable Standards are described in Chapter 3, Section 3.15.2, and in Appendix G.

2.15.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Provide for a sustained level of livestock grazing in the AMU and the CMPA, while meeting resource objectives and requirements for the S&Gs.

Management Common to All Alternatives Except Alternative B

No livestock grazing would occur on public lands within the Congressionally designated No Livestock Grazing Area.

Where livestock grazing is found to limit achievement of standards and multiple use objectives, management changes would be required in order to meet habitat and other resource objectives. The intent of grazing management is to maintain sufficient herbaceous material to provide adequate soil and watershed protection, to provide forage and cover for wildlife and wild horses, and to meet other resource objectives. Wherever existing grazing management practices on public land are determined to be contributing to nonattainment of standards and other resource objectives, appropriate actions would be implemented.

Areas burned by wildland or prescribed fire would be rested for a minimum of two growing seasons before being reopened to grazing, and then only when monitoring data support resumption of grazing. Rest for less than two growing seasons may be justified on a case-by-case basis, based upon resource data and plant community requirements.

Alternative A

Livestock grazing use would continue to be authorized in the AMU and in the CMPA outside of the No Livestock Grazing Area, consistent with the existing land use plan, PL106-399, the S&Gs (USDI 1997a), and applicable activity plans.

The utilization level as measured at the end of the growing season is managed on a pasture average basis to not exceed 60 percent on nonnative seedings and 50 percent on native herbaceous forage plants, except where lower use levels may be necessary to prevent detrimental effects on habitat quality for sage-grouse.

Additional forage, periodically available as the result of favorable growing conditions, would be made available to qualified applicants through temporary nonrenewable (TNR) grazing authorizations as consistent with management objectives for existing land use plans and applicable activity plans.

Alternative B

Livestock grazing would be eliminated from all public lands in the Planning Area.

Alternative C

Nonconsumptive uses would be emphasized in the Planning Area while providing for minimal sustainable livestock grazing that meets allotment management (natural resource) objectives, and the S&Gs (USDI 1997a).

Unless specifically needed as a vegetation management tool, the utilization level as measured at the end of the growing season would not exceed 50 percent on nonnative seedings and 40 percent on native herbaceous forage plants, on a pasture average basis.

Additional forage production, available during years of favorable growing conditions, would not be made available to livestock through TNR authorizations. The additional forage would be retained on site for values other than livestock production.

Proposed RMP

Management actions would provide for sustainable livestock grazing in the Planning Area that meets allotment management (natural resource) objectives, and the S&Gs (USDI 1997a). Revision of AMPs would be based on evaluations and rangeland health assessments, which would determine allowable AUMs and plant community management.

Unless specifically needed as a vegetation management tool, the utilization level as measured at the end of the growing season would not exceed 60 percent on nonnative seedings and 50 percent on native herbaceous forage plants, on a pasture average basis, except where lower use levels may be necessary to prevent detrimental effects on habitat quality for sage-grouse.

Unless grazing is specifically needed as a vegetation management tool within the Planning Area, the following specific areas totaling 8,971 public land acres would be excluded from livestock grazing: Mud Creek Exclosure, Getty Spring Exclosure, Mickey Basin RNA/ACEC Exclosure, Mickey Hot Spring Proposed ACEC Exclosure, Alvord Slough Exclosure, Borax Lake ACEC Exclosure, Tum Tum Lake RNA/ACEC Exclosure, Mann Lake Recreation Area, Burke Spring Exclosure, Pueblo Slough Exclosure, Lily Lake Exclosure, Fish Lake Campground Exclosure, and Jackman Park Campground Exclosure. Grazing would be excluded from the Highway 205 Pasture of the LaVoy Tables Allotment, but trailing would be allowed. See Map 2.15.1.

TNR grazing use may be authorized to make additional forage available to livestock operators in years of favorable growing conditions, consistent with meeting resource objectives. Resource objectives may include reducing competition between undesirable annual species and desirable perennial species or reducing the quantity of standing, dead herbaceous material in nonnative seedings.

Alternative E

To the extent possible grazing opportunities would be maximized in the Planning Area while meeting the S&Gs (USDI 1997a).

Unless specifically needed as a vegetation management tool, the utilization level as measured at the end of the growing season would not exceed 60 percent on herbaceous plants in both uplands and nonnative seedings, on a pasture average basis, except where lower use levels may be necessary to prevent detrimental effects on habitat quality for sage-grouse.

Optimize authorization of TNR grazing use of additional production in years of favorable growing conditions, consistent with meeting resource objectives.

Objective 2. Implement administrative solutions and rangeland projects to provide proper management for livestock grazing while meeting resource objectives and requirements for S&Gs (USDI 1997a).

Alternative A

Interim and long-term grazing management and stocking levels would continue to be adjusted in accordance with results of monitoring studies, allotment evaluations, and rangeland health assessments. Accepted livestock management practices would continue to be implemented (e.g. adjustment of the timing, duration, frequency of grazing, and periodic rest or deferment). These practices would continue to be supplemented by administrative actions (e.g. season of use changes, stocking level adjustments, exclusionary pastures or rangeland projects) to accomplish natural resource management objectives.

New rangeland improvement projects could be implemented to open under-utilized areas to grazing and relieve the grazing pressure on other areas. Existing projects would be maintained if they continue to support livestock grazing or other purposes. Projects that do not function to support grazing would be abandoned and the sites rehabilitated.

Alternative B

Since no livestock grazing would be authorized, no new rangeland improvement projects in support of livestock grazing would be planned or implemented. All existing rangeland projects that exclusively supported livestock grazing would be abandoned and removed, or rehabilitated.

Alternative C

Administrative actions (e.g. season of use changes, stocking level adjustments, exclusion of livestock from specific areas) would be emphasized to accomplish natural resource management objectives. Rangeland projects or accepted livestock management practices would be implemented when administrative actions alone would not accomplish natural resource objectives. Rangeland projects that do not function to enhance resource values or assist in meeting management objectives would be removed, and project sites would be rehabilitated.

Proposed RMP

Interim and long-term grazing management and stocking levels would be adjusted in accordance with results of monitoring studies, allotment evaluations, and rangeland health assessments. Accepted livestock management practices (e.g. adjustment of the timing, duration, frequency of grazing, or periodic rest or deferment) would be implemented. These would be supplemented by administrative actions (e.g. season of use changes, stocking level adjustments, exclusionary pastures) or rangeland projects to accomplish natural resource management objectives.

New rangeland improvement projects could be implemented within the AMU to open under-utilized areas to grazing and relieve the grazing pressure on other areas. Within the CMPA, new projects must be consistent with the purpose and objectives of the CMPA. Existing projects within the Planning Area would be maintained if they support livestock grazing or other uses. Existing projects that do not function to support grazing or other uses within the AMU would be abandoned and the sites rehabilitated. Existing projects within the CMPA that do not function to support grazing, other uses, or promote the purpose or the objectives of the CMPA would be modified or abandoned and the sites rehabilitated.

Alternative E

Rangeland projects and accepted livestock practices would be emphasized as the preferred solution to meet natural resource management objectives. Administrative actions would be applied when structural developments or accepted livestock management practices would not accomplish natural resource management objectives.

New rangeland improvement projects could be implemented to open under-utilized areas to grazing and relieve the grazing pressure on other areas. Existing projects would be maintained if they continue to support livestock grazing. Projects that do not function to support grazing would be abandoned and the sites rehabilitated.

2.15.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.16 Wildland Fire Management

2.16.1 Goal 1 - Provide an appropriate management response to all wildland fires emphasizing firefighter and public safety.

2.16.1.1 Management Framework

Firefighter and public safety are the highest priority during all wildland fire incidents. Once life safety has been secured, protection of private property and natural and cultural resources becomes the priority in suppression actions.

The Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review (USDA/USDI, 1995) states that fire is a critical natural process and that it must be reintroduced into the ecosystem on a landscape scale. In many areas, this should occur at a higher frequency (shorter return interval) than has been the case over the past 50 or more years. Wildland fire evaluations and management decisions are based upon approved fire management and activity level plans that are or would be tiered to current and future RMPs. The Policy emphasizes that for all natural (i.e., lightning-caused) ignitions, the manager should be able to choose from the full spectrum of management actions from prompt and full suppression to allowing a wildland fire to burn freely and function in its natural ecological role. Wildland fire management strategies and suppression activities should minimize damage to long-term ecosystem function and emphasize the protection, restoration, or maintenance of key habitat types.

A Fire Management Plan (FMP) would be developed for the Burns District, including the Planning Area. Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas would be identified in the FMP. Fire suppression actions within the Planning Area would follow current agency policy. Firefighter and public safety are the first priority in all fire management actions. All naturally ignited wildland fires would be evaluated to determine whether they are appropriate for wildland fire use to achieve resource benefits. Fire suppression actions, including the use of heavy equipment and aerially delivered retardant, would follow current agency policies and procedures.

2.16.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Implement appropriate fire suppression actions in the WUI and areas identified as possessing significant values that could be significantly altered by unplanned wildland fire. Pursue cooperative management agreements with private landowners to cooperatively manage wildland fire.

Management Common to All Alternatives

All wildland fires would be suppressed using appropriate management actions. An FMP would be developed for the Burns District, including the Planning Area.

Alternative A

Under current management, WUI areas have not been identified in the Burns District.

The Proposed RMP and Alternatives B, C and E

WUI areas around the communities of Andrews, Burns, Crane, Diamond, Drewsey, Fields, Frenchglen, Lawen, Princeton, Riley, Wagontire, and other areas within the Burns Interagency Fire Zone where there is a concentration of structures that may modify fire suppression objectives, would be identified in the FMP.

Objective 2. Implement the appropriate management actions upon discovery of wildland fires in areas outside of the designated WUI or areas that possess significant values that could be impaired by uncontrolled wildland fire. Pursue cooperative management agreements with private landowners to cooperatively manage wildland fire.

Alternative A

All wildland fires would continue to be suppressed using appropriate fire management methods.

Alternative B

All wildland fires that threaten human life, private property, or areas that possess significant resource value would be suppressed using appropriate fire management methods. Wildland fires would be evaluated to determine whether they are appropriate for wildland fire use for resource benefits. Factors that would affect the decision to suppress or manage for resource benefits would include, but not be limited to; threats to human life, availability of resources to manage the fire, and number of fires burning locally, regionally and nationally. The appropriate suppression action would be implemented on all wildland fires that are not suitable for wildland fire use.

Alternative C

Same as Alternative B.

Proposed RMP

All wildland fires that threaten human life, private property, or areas that possess significant resource or economic value would be suppressed using appropriate fire management methods. Wildland fires that do not threaten human life or private property would be evaluated for the potential of wildland fire use for resource benefits. Factors that would affect the decision to suppress or manage for resource benefits would include, but not be limited to; threats to human life, availability of resources to manage the fire, and number of fires burning locally, regionally and nationally.

Alternative E

Same as Alternative A.

2.16.2 Goal 2 - Restore and maintain the integrity of ecosystems consistent with appropriate fire regimes and land uses.

2.16.2.1 Management Framework

Fire is recognized as an ecological process. However, past management actions have intentionally and unintentionally altered the role of fire in the Planning Area. Changes to the role of fire have resulted fuel loads outside the historic range of variability and has increased the risk and probability of large, catastrophic wildland fires. Naturally ignited wildland fires may not occur in appropriate locations or timing to achieve desired ecosystem conditions; therefore, prescribed fire and mechanical treatments may be used to reduce hazardous fuels and restore ecosystems.

Unplanned wildland fires may also burn with greater intensity than historically. The severity of these fires may result in altered biological and, in some instances, physical conditions. Plants that have adapted to periodic burning over many generations may be severely damaged, or killed by the high intensity fire. Soils may also be physically altered by the high intensity fires. The risk of soil erosion may also be uncharacteristically increased following high intensity fires that severely damage the understory vegetation. Management actions may be necessary following high intensity fires to stabilize the site and rehabilitate area. The primary goal of Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation, after protecting human life and private property, is to protect the site from degradation. The BLM's Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Handbook (H-1742-1) outlines the process for implementing emergency fire rehabilitation projects following wildland fires. Emergency fire rehabilitation funds may be used for the following purposes:

- to protect life, property, and soil, water, and vegetation resources;
- to prevent unacceptable on-site or off-site damage;
- to facilitate meeting land use plan objectives and complying with applicable laws; and
- to reduce the invasion and establishment of undesirable or invasive plant species.

2.16.2.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Implement management actions across the Planning Area that maintain or return plant communities to the historic fire regime, except where changes to the biophysical environment have progressed to the point that a return to historic conditions is impractical. In areas where the biophysical environment has changed significantly and a return to historic conditions is not possible or ecologically desirable, the appropriate fire regime would be determined based upon current conditions. Management actions would be implemented to establish the appropriate fire regime.

Management Common to all Alternatives

MRDG would be followed prior to fuels treatment within the Wilderness or WSA.

Alternative A

Mechanical treatments and prescribed fire or both would continue to be used to reduce hazardous fuel accumulations and for the restoration of ecosystems across the Planning Area.

Alternative B

WUI and other areas with resource values that are suitable for fuels reduction treatment would be identified. Mechanical treatments and prescribed fire or both would be used to reduce fuel loading in areas where the fire regime has been altered. Naturally ignited fires will be evaluated for resource benefits.

Alternative C

Same as Alternative B.

Proposed RMP

WUI and other areas with resource values that are suitable for fuels reduction treatment would be identified. Mechanical treatments and prescribed fire or both would be used to reduce fuel loading in areas where the fire regime has been altered. Naturally ignited fires would be evaluated for resource benefits. The BLM would assist local government in developing new markets for byproducts from fuels reduction treatments.

Alternative E

WUI and other areas with resource values that are suitable for fuels reduction treatment would be identified. Mechanical treatments and prescribed fire or both would be used to reduce fuel loading in areas where the fire regime has been altered. The BLM would assist local government in developing new markets for byproducts from fuels reduction treatments.

Objective 2. Assess burned areas for appropriate biological and physical rehabilitation activities.

Management Common to all Alternatives

Stabilization and rehabilitation activities will follow current BLM regulations and guidelines (Departmental Manual 620 DM 3). Selection of stabilization and rehabilitation methods will occur after site specific analysis and follow the Interagency Burned Area Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook. MRDG will be followed prior to stabilization and rehabilitation activities within the Wilderness or WSA.

Alternative A

All burned areas would continue to be evaluated for rehabilitation actions. A combination of mechanized and nonmechanized equipment would continue to be used to rehabilitate areas altered by fire suppression activities. Burned areas would be evaluated for the necessity of seeding. Species considered for revegetation following wildland fire would include native and introduced varieties adapted to local systems.

Alternative B

All burned areas would be evaluated for rehabilitation actions. A combination of mechanized and nonmechanized equipment would be used to rehabilitate areas altered by fire suppression activities. A mixture of native plant species would be used to rehabilitate burned areas where natural recovery is observed or expected to be limited.

Alternative C

All burned areas would be evaluated for rehabilitation actions. A combination of mechanized and nonmechanized equipment would be used to rehabilitate areas altered by fire suppression activities. A mixture of native plant species would be used to rehabilitate burned areas where natural recovery is observed or expected to be limited.

Proposed RMP

All burned areas would be evaluated for rehabilitation actions. A combination of mechanized and nonmechanized equipment would be used to rehabilitate areas altered by fire suppression activities. A mixture of native and introduced plant species would be considered for stabilization and rehabilitation projects based on an analysis of site specific conditions and species availability.

Alternative E

All burned areas would be evaluated for rehabilitation actions. A combination of mechanized and nonmechanized equipment would be used to rehabilitate areas altered by fire suppression activities. A mixture of native and introduced plant species would be used to provide maximum economic production.

2.16.3 Goal 3 - Identify areas that qualify for suitable fuels reduction treatments to protect urban interface areas, resource developments, and other resource values.

2.16.3.1 Management Framework

Although the desirability of increasing fire frequencies in many areas is well established and is described above, current fuel loads are sufficiently high that wildland fires or prescribed burns may result in severe fires that are harmful to soil conditions and other habitat values. In such areas, mechanical reduction in fuel quantity or alteration of the fuels' character may be needed to reduce prescribed or wildland fire risks.

2.16.3.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Develop a management strategy that specifically identifies the WUIs, resource values, and resource developments that need to be considered for fuels reduction planning throughout the Planning Area. Pursue cooperative management agreements with private landowners and other state and federal land management agencies to cooperatively manage vegetation and fuels within the WUI.

Alternative A

There is currently no management direction concerning WUI areas or areas within the Burns Interagency Fire Zone possessing significant resource values.

Proposed RMP and Alternatives B, C, and E

WUIs areas around the communities of Andrews, Burns, Crane, Diamond, Drewsey, Fields, Frenchglen, Lawen, Princeton, Riley, Wagontire, and other areas would be identified in the FMP according to the current WUI definition. Areas within the Burns Interagency Fire Zone that possess significant resource values would be identified.

2.16.4 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.17 Lands and Realty

2.17.1 Goal - Provide lands, interests in land, and authorizations for public and private uses while maintaining and improving resource values and public land administration.

2.17.1.1 Management Framework

Section 102 of the FLPMA requires that public land be retained in federal ownership unless disposal of a particular parcel would serve the national interest. Acquisition and disposal of land are necessary to consolidate ownership patterns to provide for more efficient land management and administration for both public and private land owners. Retention and acquisition of land containing important resource values would provide for long-term protection and management of those values.

ROWs and other land uses including wind, solar, biomass, and other forms of renewable energy development are recognized as valid uses of the public lands and are authorized pursuant to sections 302 and 501 of the FLPMA.

The BLM has new policy guidance on military activities and both renewable and nonrenewable sources of energy. Many of these types of public land uses are typically authorized by ROWs or other realty use authorizations. The policies provide consistent guidance on timely processing of applications for these uses and recognize that military and energy uses are legitimate uses of public lands, are authorized by law, and are encouraged in acceptable areas on public lands.

Section 503 of the FLPMA provides for the designation of ROW corridors and encourages utilization of ROWs in common to minimize environmental effects and the proliferation of separate ROWs. BLM policy, as described in BLM Manual 2801.13B1, is to encourage prospective applicants to locate their proposals within corridors. Designation of avoidance and exclusion areas would provide early notice to potential applicants when they are planning ROW, realty use, and renewable energy projects. Only facilities and uses that are consistent with the specially designated avoidance areas would be permitted. Designation of exclusion zones would provide protection of lands and resources that have values incompatible with ROW, realty, and renewable energy uses.

The primary form of authorization for wind and solar projects would be a ROW or other realty use authorization. Although off-lease infrastructure such as roads, pipelines, and powerlines would be permitted by realty authorizations, the primary authority for geothermal development is the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970. Management actions and the effects of geothermal leasing may be found in the Energy and Minerals section of this document.

Both hazardous and nonhazardous waste disposal are prohibited on public lands to limit the United States' potential liability associated with the disposal of wastes. Private lands are generally available for private waste disposal. If a bonafide public need for new waste disposal sites arises, land could be made available by sale or exchange. Currently, no authorized waste disposal sites are located on public lands in the Planning Area.

Unauthorized uses of public lands result in financial loss to the United States and damage to the public land and its resources. Section 102(a)(9) of the FLPMA establishes the policy of the United States to collect fair market value for use of the public lands. Unless uses are authorized, no compensation is received. Further, Section 303(g) of the FLPMA states that "use, occupancy, or development of any portion of the public lands contrary to any regulation of the Secretary or other responsible authority, or contrary to any order issued pursuant to any such regulation, is unlawful and prohibited."

Due to the generally intermingled nature of public and private lands in some parts of the Planning Area, the need for acquisition of legal public and administrative access is required to continue effective administration and public use of these lands. This need becomes more acute as public use of these lands increases and as land owners become more aware of the value of public and private land for recreation and other purposes. Land tenure adjustment actions (exchanges or fee purchases) can be a valuable tool for access acquisitions. However, without careful review, lands actions, particularly exchanges, can result in lost access. Other tools can also be utilized, such as constructing new roads around lands where access is restricted and acquisition cost is excessive, or where such acquisition is not feasible.

Section 204 of the FLPMA gives the Secretary of the Interior the authority to make, modify, extend, or revoke withdrawals, and mandates review of withdrawals.

Interior Departmental Policy (DM 603) further requires the following:

- All withdrawals shall be kept to a minimum, consistent with the demonstrated needs of the agency requesting the withdrawals.
- Lands shall be available for other public uses to the fullest extent possible, consistent with the purposes of the withdrawal.
- A current and continuing review of existing withdrawals shall be instituted.

2.17.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Retain, consolidate, acquire land or interest in land with high public resource values for effective administration and improvement of resource management. Make available for disposal public land meeting the disposal criteria contained in Section 203(a) of the FLPMA.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Planning Area
Land tenure would be based on three general zones (see Table 2.17.1): (1) Generally, Zones 1, 1A and 1B are lands identified for retention in public ownership and includes high resource value lands such as wilderness, WSAs, WSRs and ACECs. Depending on the alternative, some exceptions would be allowable in Zones 1 and 1B to allow for limited disposal of public lands in exchange for lands containing significant public resource values; for public purposes; to resolve trespass situations, or other needs. Nonpublic lands in Zones 1, 1A and 1B would be given a higher priority for acquisition than other zones; (2) Zones 2 and 2A include BLM administered lands outside of Zone 1 areas and have been identified generally for retention and consolidation of ownership, but may be considered for limited disposal by exchange or other methods. Nonpublic lands in Zones 2 and 2A generally would not receive high priority for acquisition, depending upon the Alternative; and (3) Zone 3 lands generally have low or unknown resource values and meet the disposal criteria of section 203 of the FLPMA. They are potentially suitable for disposal by a variety of means. Nonpublic lands in Zone 3 would receive the lowest or no priority for acquisition.

The Land Tenure Zones are applicable to the surface estate, as well as the mineral estate or other partial interests of the United States.

Disposal of land is not imminent based solely upon its placement in a land tenure disposal zone. In addition to conforming with the appropriate land tenure zone established by the land use plan, lands transactions require additional interdisciplinary screening, public input, site specific environmental review, and required findings and decisions before a project can be implemented. For example, exchanges and other disposals require a specific finding that the public interest will be well served by making the exchange. The Steens Act additionally requires that all exchanges of land within the CMPA must further the purpose and objectives specified in Section 102 of the Act. See Appendix J for a complete explanation of land tenure.

All lands identified for any form of disposal in this land use plan, including leases and conveyances under the Recreation & Public Purpose (R&PP) Act, the Desert Land Act, State Indemnity Selections, or other applicable authority are hereby classified for such disposal under Section 7 of the Taylor Grazing Act (42 U.S.C. 315f) and 43 CFR 2400.

Acquisition opportunities within or adjacent to special management areas would be considered higher priority than acquisition of nonpublic lands elsewhere in the Planning Area. Acquired lands within wilderness, WSAs, ACECs, WSRs or those that have unique or fragile resources would be managed the same as the surrounding designation. Lands acquired without special management goals would be managed in the same manner as comparable surrounding public lands.

All forms of acquisition would be with willing land owners except as provided for in Section 205(a) of the FLPMA. This exception provides for use of eminent domain only to secure access to public lands and only to the minimum corridor necessary to achieve this purpose. With this exception, the BLM does not have condemnation authority in the Planning Area.

Table 2.17.1: Land Tenure

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	PRMP	Alternative E
Zone 1 Acres - Planning Area	1,533,505	1,649,470	1,202,317	876,615	705,072
AMU	1,149,161	1,221,314	1,202,317	876,615	705,072
CMPA	384,344	428,156	0	0	0
Zone 1A Acres - Planning Area	0	0	171,019	172,191	171,019
AMU	0	0	0	0	0
CMPA	0	0	171,019	172,191	171,019
Zone 1B Acres - Planning Area	0	0	257,136	255,964	257,136
AMU	0	0	0	0	0
CMPA	0	0	257,136	255,964	257,136
Zone 2 Acres - Planning Area	108,219	0	15,158	340,323	503,948
AMU	66,376	0	15,158	340,323	503,948
CMPA	41,843	0	0	0	0
Zone 2A Acres - Planning Area	0	0	0	1,319	0
AMU	0	0	0	1,319	0
CMPA	0	0	0	0	0
Zone 3 Acres - Planning Area	7,745	0	3,837	3,055	12,296
AMU	5,777	0	3,837	3,055	12,296
CMPA	1,968	0	0	0	0

Alternative A

Planning Area
Land tenure adjustments would be consistent with existing land use planning with emphasis on acquiring land with high public resource values such as lands within ACECs or WSAs, T&E species habitat, or riparian/wetland areas, etc.

Under this alternative, Zone 1 lands include WSAs; ACECs; important wildlife, range, and recreational values; and well blocked areas of public land. Zone 2 lands have generally fragmented ownership patterns or are suspected of having relatively lower resource values. Zone 3 lands are those that have been found to be difficult and uneconomical to manage, are not suitable for management by another federal department or agency, and have relatively low resource values.

Specifically, public lands in Zone 1 would be retained. Public lands in Zone 2 may be exchanged for higher resource value lands in Zone 1 or 2. Zone 2 lands would not be sold. Zone 3 lands may be exchanged to acquire higher resource value lands in Zones 1or 2 or may be sold if exchange is unlikely. Lands may be acquired in any zone on a case-by-case basis by exchange, donation, or purchase, consistent with existing land use planning, regulation, and law.

Alternative B

Planning Area
All public lands in the Planning Area would be identified for retention (Zone 1) to protect resources from commodity producing activities that could occur if the lands were conveyed into nonpublic ownership. No lands would be identified for disposal by any means; thus, no Zone 2 or 3 would be designated. Since no disposal is authorized, all acquisition of land anywhere in the Planning Area would be by donation or purchase with emphasis on acquiring lands with natural values and eliminating commodity production. Land may be acquired by exchange only where the public lands involved in the exchange are located outside the Andrews RA.

Alternative C

AMU
Under this alternative, Zone 1 lands are those lands outside the CMPA that contain WSAs, parcels with wilderness characteristics, SRMAs, ACECs, HMAs, special status species habitat, significant cultural/historical sites, Class I and Class II VRM areas, important wildlife, range, and recreational values, and well blocked areas of public land. Zone 2 lands have generally fragmented ownership patterns and are suspected of having relatively low resource values. Zone 3 lands are those that have been found to be difficult and uneconomical to manage, are not suitable for management by another federal department or agency, and have relatively low resource values.

Public land holdings in Zone 1 are retention/acquisition zones and would be retained and increased, with emphasis on acquiring land with natural or cultural values. Zone 1 lands may not be disposed of under any circumstances. Public lands in Zones 2 and 3 may be exchanged for nonpublic lands containing important natural values in Zones 1, 1A, or 1B. Disposal of lands by exchange in Zones 2 and 3 may also be utilized in some cases to resolve agricultural or occupancy trespass. If exchange is unlikely, Zone 3 lands may also be made available for disposal by state indemnity selection, R&PP Act lease or sale, public sale, or other authorized method.

Nonpublic lands in Zone 1 containing important natural or cultural values may be acquired by exchange, purchase, or donation with the goal of ultimately achieving full fee interest in this zone. Nonpublic lands containing important natural or cultural values in Zones 2 and 3 may be acquired only by purchase or donation.

In Zone 1 where fee acquisition is not possible, special emphasis would be placed upon acquiring conservation easements for nondevelopment /conservation purposes to protect natural or cultural values.

CMPA
Zone 1A consists solely of lands within the Steens Mountain Wilderness. Zone 1B lands are all lands within the CMPA that are not designated wilderness.

Public land holdings in Zone 1A and 1B are retention/acquisition zones and would be retained and increased, with emphasis on acquiring land with natural or cultural values. Zone 1A lands may not be disposed of under any circumstances. Zone 1B lands may be disposed of only by exchange that furthers the purpose and objectives specified in Section 102 of the Steens Act.

Nonpublic lands in Zones 1A, and 1B containing important natural or cultural values may be acquired by exchange, purchase, or donation with the goal of ultimately achieving full fee interest in these zones.

In Zones 1A, and 1B where fee acquisition is not possible, special emphasis would be placed upon entering into conservation management agreements, acquiring conservation easements, and providing incentive payments for nondevelopment /conservation purposes to protect natural or cultural values.

Proposed RMP

AMU
Under this alternative, Zone 1 lands are those lands outside the CMPA that contain WSAs, SRMAs, ACECs, HMAs, important cultural/historical sites, and important wildlife, range, and recreational values. Zone 2 lands have generally fragmented ownership patterns or are well blocked public lands that are suspected of having less important resource values. Zone 2A lands are potentially suitable for community expansion and are adjacent to the rural communities of Frenchglen, Fields, and Denio. Zone 3 lands are those that have been found to be difficult and uneconomical to manage, are not suitable for management by another federal department or agency, and have relatively low resource values.

Public land holdings in Zone 1 as shown on Map 2.17.1 would be retained and consolidated, with emphasis on acquiring land with high public resource values. Zone 1 lands may be disposed of only by exchange for nonpublic lands meeting one of the following criteria: a) The nonpublic lands must be within an ACEC, the CMPA, WSA, Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), or proposed or designated WSR; or b) The nonpublic lands must contain a critical access need as identified in an approved BLM land use plan, riparian or wetland values, habitat for listed T&E species, or cultural/historical resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Public lands in Zone 2 may be disposed of by exchange for nonpublic lands containing important public resource values in Zone 1, 1A or 1B or by R&PP sale.

Lands in Zone 2A may be disposed of for community expansion purposes only by exchange for nonpublic lands in Zone 1A or by R&PP sale. R&PP sales in Zone 2A may not exceed ten acres per transaction.

Approximately 3,055 acres of public land in Zone 3 as identified on Map 2.17.1 would be made available for disposal by state indemnity selection, private or state exchange, R&PP Act lease or sale, public sale, or other authorized method, as applicable. Small acreages in Zones 1 and 2 may also be sold to resolve long-term, inadvertent agricultural or occupancy trespass or to correct a survey hiatus.

Nonpublic lands in Zone 1 may be acquired by exchange, purchase, donation, or other authorized method. Acquisition of nonpublic lands in Zone 2 would be limited to those lands containing the following resource values or necessarily included in an acquisition of Zone 1, 1A, and 1B lands: a) The nonpublic lands must be within an ACEC, the CMPA, WSA, SRMA or proposed or designated WSR; or b) The nonpublic lands must contain a critical access need as identified in an approved BLM land use plan, riparian or wetland values, habitat for listed T&E species, or cultural/historical resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Nonpublic lands in Zone 3 may not be acquired unless necessarily included in an acquisition of Zone 1, 1A, and 1B lands.

CMPA
Zone 1A consists solely of lands within the Steens Mountain Wilderness and the Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District. Zone 1B lands are all lands within the CMPA that are not designated wilderness or within the Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District.

Public land holdings in Zones 1A and 1B as shown on Map 2.17.1 would be retained and increased, with emphasis on acquiring land with high public resource values. Zone 1A lands may not be disposed of under any circumstances. Zone 1B lands may be disposed of only by exchange that furthers the purpose and objectives specified in Section 102 of the Steens Act.

Nonpublic lands in Zones 1A and 1B may be acquired by exchange, purchase, donation, or other authorized method. Only in Zone 1A would there be a goal of ultimately achieving full fee title in the zone.

Where fee acquisition is not possible in Zones 1A and 1B, special emphasis would be placed upon entering into conservation management agreements, acquiring conservation easements, and providing incentive payments for nondevelopment/conservation purposes to protect and manage lands with important public values.

Alternative E

AMU
Under this alternative, Zone 1 lands are those lands outside the CMPA that contain WSAs, ACECs, and lands that by law or policy must be retained. Zone 2 lands have generally fragmented ownership patterns or are well blocked public lands that are suspected of having relatively low resource values. Zone 3 lands are those that have been found to be difficult and uneconomical to manage, are not suitable for management by another federal department or agency, and have relatively low resource values.

Public land holdings in Zone 1 would be maintained in their approximate current acreage by retaining public lands and acquiring nonpublic lands with commodity producing values. Zones 1 and 2 lands may be disposed of by exchange that facilitates commodity production or by R&PP sale. Approximately 12,296 acres of public land in Zone 3 would be made available for disposal by state indemnity selection, private or state exchange, R&PP Act lease or sale, public sale, or other authorized method, as applicable. Regardless of zone, additional lands may be conveyed by any method to resolve agricultural or occupancy trespass.

Acquisition efforts would place emphasis on securing land that contains commodity producing values or that facilitates commodity production. Acquisition of land would only be authorized in Zone 1 and only by exchange. No lands would be acquired in Zones 2 or 3. There would be no acquisition by purchase or donation in any Zone under this alternative.

CMPA
Zone 1A consists solely of lands within the Steens Mountain Wilderness. Zone 1B lands are all lands within the CMPA that are not designated wilderness.

Public land holdings in Zones 1A and 1B would be maintained in their approximate current acreage by retaining public lands and acquiring nonpublic lands with commodity producing values. Zone 1A lands may not be disposed of under any circumstances. Zone 1B lands may be disposed of only by exchange that furthers the purpose and objectives specified in Section 102 of the Steens Act and that facilitates commodity production.

Acquisition efforts would place emphasis on securing land that contains commodity producing values or that facilitates commodity production. Acquisition of land would be authorized in Zones 1A and 1B only by exchange. There would be no acquisition by purchase or donation in any zone under this alternative.

Objective 2. Meet public, private and federal agency needs for realty related land use authorizations and land withdrawals including those authorizations necessary for wind, solar, biomass, and other forms of renewable energy development.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Planning Area
Applications for ROWs, realty, and renewable energy authorizations such as ROWs, leases, and permits would be processed in a timely manner, in compliance with the NEPA process. In accordance with current policy, land-use authorizations may not be issued for any use that would involve disposal or long-term storage of materials that could contaminate the land (e.g., landfills, hazardous waste disposal sites, etc.).

Valid existing rights that are not currently noted on the BLM's land status records will be adjudicated, acknowledged, and noted in accordance with applicable law.

Withdrawal review continuations, modifications, and revocations would continue in the future, as the need arises.

AMU
Generally, there is no regulatory width that dictates ROW corridors. Variation in designated width may occur within the range of alternatives.

Table 2.17.2: ROW, Realty, and Renewable Energy Use Authorizations

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Proposed RMP	Alternative E
ROW Corridor Miles	339	0	246	246	354
AMU	339	0	246	246	354
CMPA	0	0	0	0	0
Avoidance Area Acres	17,834	0	189,044	748,549	678,743
AMU	0	0	189,044	611,771	560,180
CMPA	17,834	0	0	136,778	118,563
Exclusion Area Acres	14,812	1,649,470	1,045,910	171,268	171,268
AMU	0	1,221,314	617,754	0	0
CMPA	14,812	428,156	428,156	171,268	171,268
Total Exclusion/Avoidance Acres	**32,646**	**1,649,470**	**1,234,954**	**919,817**	**850,011**
AMU	**0**	**1,221,314**	**806,798**	**611,771**	**560,180**
CMPA	**32,646**	**428,156**	**428,156**	**308,046**	**289,831**

Alternative A

Planning Area
Special designations, planning decisions, and other factors may constrain or exclude ROWs or other realty land use authorizations in the Planning Area. Subject to these constraints and the avoidance/exclusion zones noted below, the entire Planning Area would be available on a case-by-case basis to ROWs and other land uses including energy development, communications sites, and military uses.

Withdrawal and land classification actions would also be managed on a case-by-case basis. No attempt would be made to clarify management responsibilities or adjust boundary alignments with the Malheur NWR. There would be no additional new BLM withdrawals proposed under this alternative. Requests by other agencies for new withdrawals would be considered on a case by case basis.

AMU
Existing corridor designations would continue (see Table 2.17.2). Nominal corridor width would be 2,000 feet wide. New ROW facilities would be located within corridors on a case-by-case basis and designed to minimize impairment to special designated areas.

There would be no ROW, realty, and renewable energy exclusion or avoidance areas in the AMU.

Any application by a qualified entity to lease and reopen the Fields airstrip would be considered on a case-by-case basis utilizing the NEPA process.

No attempt would be made to consolidate existing parallel utility ROW facilities through crucial wildlife habitat.

CMPA
The Stonehouse WSA, would be designated as an exclusion zone, and the Kiger HMA, designated an avoidance area continuing the designations established by the Three Rivers RMP.

Alternative B

Planning Area
The entire Planning Area would be considered a ROW, realty use, and renewable energy exclusion zone except for those authorizations necessary to provide reasonable access to nonpublic lands and interest in land. Existing corridors would be eliminated and no new corridors would be designated. No authorizations or withdrawals necessary for energy development, communications uses, or for military activities would be considered. Although valid existing rights would be honored, existing authorizations including those within corridors would be terminated and facilities removed from public land where possible and when opportunities arise. Until such time as facilities can be removed, existing parallel utility ROW facilities through crucial wildlife habitat would be consolidated.

The portion of the Planning Area not already withdrawn by the Steens mineral withdrawal would be recommended for withdrawal to protect the lands from mining, energy and mineral development, military activities, and other commodity production. Favorable consideration would be given to the BLM and other agency requests for renewals, continuations, or new withdrawals for protection of resource values. Conversely, both the BLM and other agency withdrawals, which support commodity producing activities would be relinquished and terminated.

With special emphasis on excluding commodity production MOUs would be developed with the USFWS, or withdrawals and restorations would be considered to clarify management responsibilities along the boundary of the Malheur NWR.

AMU
Any proposal or application to lease and reopen the Fields airstrip would be rejected. The existing communications uses at Buckskin Mountain would be terminated and facilities removed from public land if the opportunity arises.

Alternative C

Planning Area
All ACECs, WSAs, parcels with wilderness characteristics, WSRs, SRMAs, the Steens Mountain Wilderness, and the CMPA would be designated as ROW, realty use, and renewable energy exclusion areas, except those authorizations necessary to provide reasonable access to nonpublic lands and interests in land. All lands within 0.6 miles of sage-grouse leks, deer and elk winter range, and bighorn sheep habitat would be designated as ROW, realty use, and renewable energy avoidance areas. With the exception of small scale linear distribution facilities no new communications uses would be authorized in the Planning Area. Except as noted above, applications for ROW, realty use, and renewable energy in the remainder of the Planning Area, including those for energy development and military uses, would be processed in a timely manner on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the NEPA and other applicable law.

Other federal agency requests for new withdrawals would be recommended for approval only if they would limit commodity production and protect natural values. Withdrawal and classification continuations, modifications, revocations and terminations would be recommended, as necessary. Other agencies would be encouraged to relinquish withdrawals that provide for commodity uses, while favorable consideration would be given to continuations of other agency protective withdrawals. Those withdrawal and classification reviews not scheduled or known would be considered on a case-by-case basis with emphasis on protecting natural values. MOUs would be developed with the USFWS, or withdrawals and restorations would be considered to clarify management responsibilities along the boundary of the Malheur NWR, with special emphasis on providing protection of natural values.

AMU

Approximately 246 miles of public land would be designated as ROW corridors. The designated corridors would include all existing trans-district electrical transmission lines identified by the Western Regional Corridor Study, federal and state highways, and the Fields-Denio and Catlow Valley County Roads. Nominal corridor width would be 1,000 feet on each side of centerline of existing facilities, except where the alignment forms the boundary of a special designated area. Here the width would be 2,000 feet on the side opposite that boundary. Where the specified corridor width is constrained on both sides by special designated areas, the corridor width would be the area between the boundaries of the special designated areas. All ROWs for electrical transmission lines greater than 69 kV, all mainline communications facilities, and all pipelines greater than ten inches in diameter would be required to locate in the designated corridors.

The existing communications uses at Buckskin Mountain would continue until they are obsolete, at which time they may be terminated, the facilities removed, and the lands restored. An application by a qualified entity to lease and reopen the Fields airstrip may be approved, but any proposal to convey the land out of federal ownership under the Airport and Airway Improvement Act will be rejected.

The feasibility of consolidating existing parallel utility ROW facilities through crucial wildlife habitat would be evaluated. Where deemed feasible, consolidation of facilities would be implemented for critical areas.

Approximately 254,859 acres as identified in Table 2.13.1 and Map 2.13.1would be recommended for withdrawal from the public land and mining laws. In addition, the existing withdrawal at the BLM's Fields Administrative Site would be recommended for renewal and expansion to 40 acres (NE1/4NE1/4, Sec. 23, T.38S., R.34E.) to include all existing facilities and adjacent undeveloped lands within the fenced confines of the site.

CMPA

The CMPA would be designated as a ROW, realty use, and renewable energy exclusion area, except for those authorizations necessary to provide reasonable access to nonpublic lands and interests in land.

Proposed RMP

Planning Area

Except as noted below, applications for ROW, realty use, and renewable energy authorizations in the Planning Area, including those for energy development and military uses, would be processed in a timely manner on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the NEPA and other applicable laws.

Other federal agency requests for new withdrawals or existing withdrawal relinquishments and modifications would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Withdrawal and classification continuations, modifications, revocations, and terminations would be recommended, as necessary, with special emphasis given to reviewing, revoking, and terminating all overlapping and duplicative withdrawals and classifications within the CMPA and Steens Act mineral withdrawal area. Those withdrawal and classification reviews not scheduled or known would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

MOUs would be developed with the USFWS, or withdrawals and restorations would be considered to clarify management responsibilities along the boundary of the Malheur NWR.

AMU

Corridor designations would be the same as Alternative C. All large scale facilities, as specified in Alternative C, would be encouraged to locate in the designated corridors.

All WSAs, SRMAs, and ACECs would be designated as ROW, realty use, and renewable energy avoidance areas.

Buckskin Mountain would be designated as a communication site and additional communications uses could be allowed at the site. An existing road closure to the top of the mountain would be continued in order to minimize effects to bighorn sheep. Upon designation of the site, a site management plan would be developed to facilitate efficient and timely development of compatible communications uses. Communications lease applications for new locations would be considered on a case-by-case basis, and site management plans would be developed concurrent with processing applications.

An application by a qualified entity to lease and reopen the Fields airstrip may be approved. Once the airstrip is fully developed and operational under the terms of the lease and an application is filed by a qualified entity, the lands may be conveyed under the Airport and Airway Improvement Act or other authorized method.

The feasibility of consolidating existing parallel utility ROW facilities through crucial wildlife habitat would be evaluated. Where deemed feasible, consolidation of facilities would be implemented for critical areas.

As identified in Table 2.13.1 and Map 2.13.1, 20,367 acres would be recommended for withdrawal from the public land and mining laws. In addition, the existing withdrawal of five acres at the BLM Fields Administrative Site would be recommended for renewal and expansion to ten acres in the NENE 1/4, Sec. 23, T.38S., R.34E. to include all existing facilities. In the interim, a ROW reservation would be approved to protect the additional acreage.

CMPA
All WSRs and the Steens Mountain Wilderness would be designated as ROW, realty use, and renewable energy exclusion areas, except for those authorizations necessary to provide reasonable access to nonpublic lands and interests in land. In addition to the above exception, low effect commercial activities such as filming permits may be considered on a case-by-case basis in the WSR portion of the Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District. All WSAs and ACECs would be designated as ROWs, realty use, and renewable energy avoidance areas.

Alternative E

Planning Area
Except as noted below, applications for ROW, realty use, and renewable energy authorizations in the Planning Area, including those for energy development and military uses, would be processed in a timely manner on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the NEPA and other applicable laws. Leases, permits and other authorizations would be considered and encouraged for agricultural, occupancy, filming, and other commodity-producing land uses. No new protective withdrawals would be considered for public land.

New withdrawal requests by other federal agencies would be recommended for approval only if they emphasize commodity production. Agencies would be encouraged to relinquish protective withdrawals, with favorable consideration given to continuations of other agency withdrawals that facilitate commodity uses. Withdrawal and classification continuations, modifications, revocations, and terminations would be recommended, as necessary, with special emphasis given to reviewing, revoking, and terminating all protective withdrawals and classifications. Those withdrawal and classification reviews not scheduled or known would be considered on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to reviewing, revoking, and terminating all protective withdrawals and classifications to facilitate commodity production.

MOUs would be developed with the USFWS or withdrawals and restorations would be considered to clarify management responsibilities along the boundary of the Malheur NWR, with emphasis on facilitating commodity production.

AMU
Approximately 354 miles on public land would be designated as ROW corridors. The designated corridors would include all corridors identified by the Western Regional Corridor Study, all county roads, and all federal and state highways. Additional routes would be considered where proposals arise. Nominal corridor width would be 2,500 feet on each side of centerline of existing facilities, except where the alignment forms the boundary of a special designated area. Here the width would be 5,000 feet on the side opposite that boundary. All large scale facilities, as specified in Alternative C, would be encouraged to locate in the designated corridors. Approximately 560,180 acres of public land including all WSAs and ACECs would be designated as ROW, realty use, and renewable energy authorization avoidance areas.

Buckskin Mountain would be designated a communications site and allow for additional communications uses at the site. Site management plans would be developed at Buckskin Mountain and at any new communications sites only when a need or conflict between users arise. An application by a qualified entity to lease and reopen the Fields airstrip may be

approved. Once the airstrip is fully developed and operational under the terms of the lease and an application is filed by a qualified entity, the lands may be conveyed under the Airport and Airway Improvement Act or other authorized method.

The feasibility of consolidating existing parallel utility ROW facilities through crucial wildlife habitat would be evaluated, but no action would be taken to consolidate the facilities.

Although the existing five acre withdrawal at the BLM's Fields Administrative Site in the NENE 1/4, Sec. 23, T.38S., R.34E. would be recommended for renewal, no expansion of the withdrawal would be recommended. To provide a minimal level of protection for facilities outside the existing withdrawal, a ROW reservation would be approved.

CMPA
All WSRs and the Steens Mountain Wilderness would be designated as ROW, realty use, and renewable energy exclusion areas, except for those authorizations necessary to provide reasonable access to nonpublic lands and interests in land. In addition to the above exception, low effect commercial activities such as filming permits may be considered on a case-by-case basis in the WSR portion of the Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District.

Objective 3. Acquire legal public or administrative access to public land.

Alternative A

Planning Area
Legal public or administrative access, including conservation and scenic easements, would be acquired on a case-by-case basis as the need arises. Emphasis would be placed on providing access for BLM administrative facilities and program-related activities. All land tenure actions would be reviewed for their effect on access.

Construction of new roads to accommodate a reroute around private lands may be considered where easement acquisition is not feasible or desirable, subject to the limitations expressed in the Steens Act and consistent with the TP.

Alternative B

Planning Area
Legal public or administrative access, including conservation and scenic easements, would be acquired with emphasis on controlling public access for protection of sensitive resource values. Land tenure actions would be designed such that they do not facilitate public access to these areas.

Construction of new roads around private lands would not be considered as an alternative for access easement acquisition. Roads that provide public access to lands containing sensitive resource values would be closed.

Alternative C

Planning Area
Access and easement acquisition management would be the same as Alternative B, except that closed roads would be actively reclaimed.

Proposed RMP

Planning Area
Legal public or administrative access, including conservation and scenic easements, would be acquired where public demand or an administrative need exists, including any rights necessary to control and minimize access to areas containing sensitive resource values. Emphasis would be placed on providing access to areas containing high public values and the protection of natural values. Land tenure transactions would be designed to maintain and improve public access. Potential public access easements are identified on Map 2.18.2.

Where easement acquisition for access is not feasible or desirable, but a critical access need has been identified, new roads would be constructed to accommodate a reroute around nonpublic lands, subject to the limitations expressed in the Steens Act and consistent with the TP.

Alternative E

Planning Area
Legal public or administrative access would be acquired, with emphasis on providing access to facilitate commodity production. No conservation or scenic easements would be considered.

To facilitate commodity production, new roads would be constructed to accommodate a reroute around private lands where easement acquisition is not feasible or desirable, subject to the limitations expressed in the Steens Act and consistent with the TP. Land tenure transactions would be designed to maintain and improve public access.

Objective 4. Eliminate unauthorized use of public lands.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Planning Area
Realty related unauthorized uses on public land would be detected, confirmed, and abated on all lands.

Alternative A

Planning Area
Unauthorized use of public land would be detected, confirmed, and abated, either by formal authorization or termination, on a case-by-case basis. Active restoration of lands damaged by unauthorized use would be implemented. Agricultural or occupancy trespass would be terminated or may be authorized by long-term lease, sale, or exchange, consistent with the land tenure zones.

Alternative B

Planning Area
All unauthorized use of public lands, including agricultural and occupancy uses, would be detected, confirmed, and terminated. All facilities and structures would be removed and natural restoration of lands damaged by unauthorized use would be allowed. No authorizations would be considered to allow the use to continue.

Alternative C

Planning Area
Consistent with the land tenure zones all unauthorized use of public lands would be detected, confirmed, and terminated except occupancy and agricultural uses that may be authorized by land exchange for nonpublic lands containing important natural values. Short-term permits may be utilized to authorize occupancy or agricultural trespass until an exchange can be effected. Active restoration would be implemented on lands damaged by unauthorized use.

CMPA
Consistent with the land tenure zones and the purpose and objectives of the Steens Act, all unauthorized use of public lands would be detected, confirmed, and terminated except occupancy and agricultural uses that may be authorized by land exchange for nonpublic lands containing important natural values.

Proposed RMP

Planning Area
Unauthorized use of public land would be detected, confirmed, and abated, either by formal authorization or termination, on a case-by-case basis. Active restoration of lands damaged by unauthorized use would be implemented.

AMU
Agricultural or occupancy trespass would be terminated or may be authorized by long-term lease, sale, or exchange, consistent with the land tenure zones where the lease, sale, or exchange would serve other important public objectives in addition to resolving the trespass. Regardless of the zone, long-term inadvertent agricultural or occupancy trespass may be authorized or survey hiatus corrected by sale of the minimum feasible acreage necessary to abate the unauthorized use. Such authorization or correction would be subject to the disposal criteria of the FLPMA, other

applicable laws, and the approved land use plan. Short-term permits may be utilized to authorize occupancy or agricultural trespass until a lease, sale, or exchange could be effected. Active restoration would be implemented of lands damaged by unauthorized use.

CMPA
Agricultural or occupancy trespass would be terminated or may be authorized by exchange that furthers the purpose and objectives specified in Section 102 of the Steens Act; is consistent with the land tenure zones; and, where the exchange would serve other important public objectives in addition to resolving the trespass. Short-term permits may be utilized to authorize occupancy or agricultural trespass until an exchange could be effected.

Alternative E

Planning Area
All unauthorized use of public lands would be detected, confirmed, and authorized. All agricultural or occupancy trespass would be authorized by long-term lease, sale, or exchange, regardless of the land tenure zone.

AMU
All agricultural or occupancy trespass would be authorized by long-term lease, sale, or exchange, regardless of the land tenure zone.

CMPA
All agricultural or occupancy trespass would be authorized by exchange that furthers the purpose and objectives specified in Section 102 of the Steens Act.

2.17.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.18 Transportation and Roads

2.18.1 Goal - Provide travel routes to and through BLM managed lands as appropriate to meet resource objectives while providing for private and public access needs.

2.18.1.1 Management Framework

A major element of a TP is the management and protection of the basic resources of water, soils, fish, wildlife, and vegetation while providing a route system that accommodates public, private, and administrative access needs. Numerous federal laws and internal regulations give the BLM the authority and guidance to develop and manage transportation systems. For a list of authorities see the Draft Washington and Eastern Oregon Transportation Management Plan. Section 112 of the Steens Act prohibits off road motorized travel within the CMPA and also identifies exceptions to the off-road vehicle travel prohibition. Criteria for the exceptions are attached to Appendix M. Section 112 also calls for the development of a comprehensive TP for the CMPA. This section of the Proposed RMP/FEIS meets this legislative requirement. Routes specifically addressed by name in the following alternatives will need no further analysis. An EA based on specific field inventories and need determinations of all other routes within the CMPA will complete the comprehensive requirements and be completed by December 31, 2005. The remainder of the Planning Area would continue under present transportation direction until an updated TP is developed by fall, 2008. In the interim, the open roads and ways shown on Maps 2.18.1 and 2.18.2 represent the routes historically available for motorized use and that shall remain available for such use unless changed through the development of the updated TPs mentioned above.

2.18.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Manage roads and ways within the CMPA consistent with the Route Management Categories and Maintenance Levels identified for each alternative.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Routes within this TP are either roads or ways. Ways are routes within WSAs that can be repaired in accordance with the WSA IMP. Ways fall under one or more of the Route Management Categories, depending upon their particular

purpose and need. Roads also fall under one or more Route Management Categories and their condition varies based substantially on their assigned Maintenance Level. The roads and ways currently shown on Map 2.18.3 represent the current BLM recognized motorized routes within the CMPA. Management actions within this TP pertain only to the currently mapped routes. Other routes are known to exist; however, the exact location and uses of most of these routes are not currently known. Once these unmapped routes are inventoried, an EA would be conducted to determine whether they should be added to the transportation system, converted to hiking trails, or closed and rehabilitated. Currently mapped routes may also be reevaluated through an EA process and closed, rerouted or upgraded if needed to meet resource objectives or provide for public safety. Public input to the EA(s) would be sought.

The Steens Act closed about 104 miles of motorized routes upon designation of the Steens Mountain Wilderness. These routes would remain closed across all the alternatives. This TP and subsequent EAs may also prescribe other routes for closure within the CMPA as needed to meet resource objectives or to protect persons and property. Examples of routes that may be closed include those with redundancy of purpose or those causing environmental damage. Route closures will vary by alternative. Closed routes will be signed or otherwise physically obstructed as necessary to accomplish permanent closure. Some routes closed to the public may still need to be used by private landowners to access private land or by livestock operators to administer their grazing permits. Use of these routes will be specifically authorized by the BLM after a careful analysis determines reasonable access needs.

Route Management Categories describe the primary purposes and uses for the routes. Many routes fall under more than one management category. Most use by private landowners, grazing operators, and the public occurs on Common Use Routes and is provided under casual use; therefore, it does not require a formal use authorization. Maintenance levels outline the degree of maintenance to be performed, dependent on funding levels. Maintenance of routes with limited or no public access may be the responsibility of the landowner. Private landowner maintenance of routes on BLM administered land would be authorized as needed and supervised by the BLM. Route maintenance is generally prioritized, based on safety concerns and degree of use. Inadequate funding may preclude the BLM from maintaining routes at levels assigned in this TP. Route Management Categories and Maintenance Levels are monitored and may be modified if needs and conditions change. Minimal use of traffic control signs will continue along the Steens Loop Road as needed to mitigate safety concerns. Other routes within the CMPA will not generally be signed except to address specific needs.

Route Management Categories

Common Use Routes: Routes that are open to the public but may be closed, or have seasonal use restrictions during certain sensitive periods to protect resource values such as road conditions. These include routes on BLM managed lands and private lands where public access easements have been acquired.

Cooperative Managed Routes: Routes across private, state, BLM administered, or other agency lands that are cooperatively administered and maintained. Routes may have specified levels of public use, season of use, and type of use. Administration and maintenance may be facilitated through a cooperative agreement.

Service/Permit Use Routes: Routes used only for administration, facility service, property maintenance, or those associated with an authorized permit. Motorized public use is not allowed.

Private Property Access Routes: Routes across public land used to access private property. Motorized use allowed only for private property interests and BLM administration.

Private Routes: Routes across private lands that are not open for use by the public.

Note: Access descriptions within the above Route Management Categories may be subordinate to other rights, agreements, or privileges as provided by law, policy, or other legal instrument.

Maintenance Levels

Level 1: This level is assigned to roads where maintenance is limited to protecting adjacent lands and resource values. These roads are no longer needed and are closed to traffic. The objective is to remove these roads from the transportation system. At a minimum, drainage and runoff patterns will be maintained as needed to protect adjacent lands. Grading, brushing, or slide removal will not be performed unless roadbed drainage is being adversely affected or is causing erosion. Closure and traffic restrictive devices will be maintained.

Level 2: This level is assigned to roads open seasonally or year round. Uses may include commercial, recreation, private property access, and administration purposes. Typically, these roads are passable by high clearance vehicles and are maintained, as needed, depending on funding levels. Seasonal closures or other restrictions may be needed to meet resource objectives or due to snow levels or other weather conditions. At a minimum, drainage structures will be inspected within a three-year period and maintained as needed. Grading will be conducted as necessary to correct drainage problems. Brushing will be conducted as needed. Slides may be left in place, provided they do not adversely affect drainage.

Level 3: This level is assigned to roads open seasonally or year round. Uses may include commercial, recreation, private property access and administrative purposes. Typically, these roads are natural or aggregate surfaced, but may include bituminous surface roads. These roads have a defined cross section with drainage structures such as rolling dips, culverts or ditches. They may normally be negotiated by passenger cars driving cautiously. User comfort and convenience are not considered a high priority. At a minimum, drainage structures will be inspected annually and maintained as needed. Grading will be conducted to provide a reasonable level of riding comfort at prudent speeds for the road conditions. Brushing will be conducted as needed to improve sight distance. Slides adversely affecting drainage will receive high priority for removal and other slides will be removed on a scheduled basis.

Level 4: This level is assigned to roads open seasonally or year round. Uses include commercial, recreation, private property access, and administrative purposes. Typically, these roads are single or double lane and have an aggregate or bituminous surface. This maintenance level provides access for passenger cars traveling at prudent speeds. At a minimum, the entire roadway will be maintained at least annually, although a preventive maintenance program may be established. Major problems will be repaired as discovered.

Level 5: This level is assigned to roads open seasonally or year round that carry the highest traffic volume of the transportation system. Uses include commercial, recreation, private property access, and administrative purposes. Typically, these roads are single or double lane and have an aggregate or bituminous surface. This maintenance level provides access for passenger cars traveling at prudent speeds. The entire roadway will be maintained at least annually and a preventive maintenance program will be established. Problems will be repaired as discovered.

Ways within WSAs are not maintained other than by the passage of vehicles, with certain exceptions. Exceptions are limited to the minimum mechanical maintenance necessary to provide access as follows: 1) for emergencies such as suppression activities associated with wildland fire or search and rescue; 2) to grandfathered grazing uses and facilities as defined by the WSA IMP; 3) to sites where reclamation or stabilization is needed to protect or improve the land's wilderness values; and 4) to private inholdings. In these exceptions, maintenance would occur using the "minimum tool concept" described in the WSA IMP. An EA is required to analyze maintenance alternatives except in the case of emergencies.

BMPs for the construction, maintenance, and general management of the transportation system are listed in Appendices F and M. These BMPs are consistent across all alternatives.

Easements across nonfederal lands, both public and administrative, will be sought as needed to meet resource objectives.

Management criteria specific to the Proposed RMP/FEIS are also displayed in Appendix M.

Alternative A

Retain the current road use maintenance levels and seasonal restrictions for the existing road system (Map 2.18.1) within the CMPA, subject to implementation of the Steens Act.

Existing management directions currently identified for the CMPA include the following:

- Keep the entire Steens Loop Road open at a Maintenance Level 5. This includes the use of bentonite clay as needed.
- Use the existing gate and permit system to close the Steens Loop Road to public motorized use from approximately November 15 to May 15 each year except to access the snow line on the North Steens Loop Road for winter recreation by permit.
- Decommission prelegislative closed routes leading from the Steens Loop Road as needed.

- Continue to seek voluntary public access easements across private lands to benefit recreation opportunities.
- Continue permitted motorized access along the Riddle Brothers Ranch segment of the Cold Springs Road.

Alternative B

Under this alternative, the transportation system would be managed to meet resource goals and objectives consistent with maximizing natural processes. Route closures outside of wilderness or WSAs would also prohibit mechanized use.

Management directions under Alternative B include the following:

- Close the upper portion of the Steens Loop Road from the Kiger Overlook access road to the wilderness boundary approximately one mile west of Blitzen Crossing. Approximately 18 miles of the Steens Loop Road would be closed to motorized and mechanized use. Maintain the open portion of the Steens Loop Road at Level 3.
- In addition to the Steens Loop Road, close all roads currently bounded on both sides by wilderness. Closed roads include Fish Creek, Cold Springs, Grove Creek, Indian Creek, Bone Creek, Big Alvord Creek, Newton Cabin, and Three Springs. Approximately 31 miles of roads would be closed to motorized and mechanized use.
- Close all cherrystem roads and ways associated with WSAs. Approximately 107 miles of WSA routes would be closed to motorized and mechanized use.
- Assign Maintenance Level 2 to all remaining open roads within the CMPA. Consider seasonal closures as needed to reduce damage to road surfaces, protect resources, or provide for public safety.
- Use the existing gate system to close the Steens Loop Road to public motorized use from approximately November 15 to May 15 each year. Open gates as snow and road conditions allow. Seasonally close all other routes within the CMPA from February 1 to May 15.
- Install a gate on the Moon Hill Road near the Diamond Grain Camp Road to protect road surfaces and improve natural values.
- Develop Cooperative Road Management Agreements or acquire voluntary easements from private landowners and other entities that improve natural values.

Alternative C

Under this alternative, the transportation system would be managed to meet resource goals and objectives consistent with emphasizing the protection of natural values. Route closures outside of wilderness or WSAs would be for motorized vehicles only; therefore, mechanized use (e.g., mountain bikes) would be allowed.

Management directions under Alternative C include the following:

- Close the Rooster Comb portion of the Steens Loop Road to motorized use. Approximately three miles of the road would be affected.
- Continue to allow mechanized and other nonmotorized forms of access. Maintain the open portion of the Steens Loop Road at Level 4.
- Close the Cold Springs Road west of Nye Cabin.
- Close the Fish Creek Road where it is currently bounded on both sides by wilderness.
- Close other specific routes as shown on Approximately seven miles of routes would be closed.
- Assign Maintenance Level 2 to all remaining open roads within the CMPA. Consider seasonal closures as needed to reduce damage to road surfaces, protect resources, or provide for public safety.
- Use the existing gate and permit system to close the Steens Loop Road to public motorized use from approximately November 15 to May 15 each year except to access the snow line on the North Steens Loop Road for nonmotorized forms of winter recreation.
- Install a gate to seasonally close the Moon Hill Road near the Diamond Grain Camp Road to protect road surfaces and improve natural values.
- Develop Cooperative Road Management Agreements or acquire voluntary easements from private land owners and other entities to improve natural values.

Proposed RMP

Under this alternative, the transportation management system would be managed to meet resource goals and objectives that strike a balance between cultural, economic, ecological, and social values in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.

Management directions under the Proposed RMP, include the following:

- Keep the entire Steens Loop Road, including the routes to the overlooks, open to motorized use at Maintenance Level 5 except the Rooster Comb section, which would be upgraded to Maintenance Level 3.
- Keep the Fish Creek, Cold Springs, Grove Creek, Big Alvord Creek, Newton Cabin, Indian Creek and Three Springs routes open where bounded on both sides by the Steens Mountain Wilderness.
- Include the Bone Creek Road in the transportation route inventory EA to determine specific management options related to facilitating private land management and protecting wilderness characteristics.
- Keep open all cherry stem roads and ways associated with WSAs except as shown on Maps 2.18.3 and 2.19.1.
- Retain Maintenance Level 3 as currently prescribed for the Moon Hill Road system.
- Close specific routes as shown on Map 2.19.1 and 2.18.3. Approximately six miles of routes would be closed.
- Assign a Maintenance Level 3 to the Kiger Wild Horse Overlook Road; the Witzel/Yriarte access road; the road to Riddle Brothers Ranch; the Virginia Valley Road to its junction with the private land in Section 9, Township 30 South, Range 35 East; the Kiger Ridge Road between Fred Otley's driveway and its junction with the private land in Section 16, Township 32 South, Range 33 East; and a portion of the Fence Creek Roads.
- Assign Maintenance Level 4 to the road into Fred Otley's ranch.
- Use the existing gate and permit system to close the Steens Loop Road to public motorized use from approximately November 15 to May 15 each year except to access the snow line on the North Steens Loop Road for motorized and nonmotorized forms of winter recreation.
- Assign Maintenance Level 2 to all remaining open roads within the CMPA unless otherwise prescribed under a Cooperative Management Agreement. Consider seasonal closures and road upgrades as needed to reduce damage to road surfaces, protect resources, or provide for public safety.
- Install a gate to seasonally close the Moon Hill Road near the Diamond Grain Camp Road from February 1 to May 15 each year to protect road surfaces and improve natural values. Install an additional gate on the Moon Hill Road near the base of Moon Hill to protect higher elevation road surfaces. Closure of the Moon Hill gate would correspond with the closure of the lower gate on the North Steens Loop Road.
- Develop Cooperative Road Management Agreements or acquire voluntary easements with private land owners and other entities to provide recreation opportunities, improve natural values, or otherwise improve access.
- Allow motorized access to existing dispersed campsites from open routes unless precluded by special designation or other resource concerns.
- Allow the parking of motorized vehicles within 100 feet of centerline along many of the open routes unless precluded by special designation or other resource concerns.
- Limit motorized traffic and vehicle parking to existing disturbed areas adjacent to the Steens Loop Road and the overlook roads from Jackman Park to the Rooster Comb.
- Allow permitted motorized access along the Riddle Brothers Ranch segment of the Cold Springs Road.

Alternative E

Under this alternative, the transportation management system would be managed to meet resource goals and objectives that emphasize commodity production and public uses.

Management directions under Alternative E include:

- Keep the entire Steens Loop Road open to motorized use at Maintenance Level 5 except the Rooster Comb section, which would be upgraded to Maintenance Level 3.
- Expand the seasonal winter permit access on the Steens Loop Road by allowing winter long motorized public access to the snow line on the North Steens Loop Road and by allowing winter long motorized access to the South Steens Campground on the South Steens Loop Road. Expanded access on the South Steens Loop Road would be dependent on upgrading the road as necessary to prevent road damage during wet periods. Plowing of snow would be limited, so access would also be dependent on snow and road conditions.
- Retain Maintenance Level 3 as currently prescribed for the Moon Hill Road system.

- All motorized routes within the CMPA would remain open. Consider seasonal closures and road upgrades as needed to reduce damage to road surfaces.
- Assign Maintenance Level 2 to all remaining open roads within the CMPA unless otherwise prescribed under a Cooperative Management Agreement.
- Develop Cooperative Road Management Agreements or acquire voluntary easements with private land owners and other entities to provide recreation opportunities, or otherwise improve access.
- Allow motorized access to dispersed campsites from routes shown on Map 2.18.1, unless precluded by special designation or other resource concerns.
- Allow the parking of motorized vehicles within 100 feet of centerline along many of the open routes shown on Map 2.18.1 unless precluded by special designation or other resource concerns.

2.18.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.19 Off-Highway Vehicles

2.19.1 Goal - Manage motorized (OHV) and mechanized (nonmotorized) vehicle use to protect resource values, promote public safety, provide OHV and mechanized vehicle use opportunities where appropriate and allowable, and minimize conflicts among various users.

2.19.1.1 Management Framework

The BLM manages OHV use under the FLPMA and Executive Order 11644 (as amended by Executive Order 11989). Federal regulations (43 CFR Part 8340) and BLM planning guidance require the BLM to designate all BLM administered land as either open, limited, or closed, in regard to off-road (now commonly termed "off-highway") vehicle use. These designations are to help meet public demand for OHV and mechanized vehicle activities, protect natural resources, promote public safety, and minimize conflicts among users. The National Strategy for Motorized OHV Use on Public Lands and the National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan provide further guidance.

2.19.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Manage OHV and mechanized vehicle use in conformance with OHV designations.

Management Common to All Alternatives

The Steens Mountain Wilderness would be designated as closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. If not otherwise restricted, the remainder of the CMPA, outside the Steens Mountain Wilderness and including the WSAs, would be designated as limited to designated roads and ways. Only those roads and ways identified in the CMPA TP would be available for OHV and mechanized vehicle use.

All management actions for those portions of ACECs within WSAs would be governed by the WSA IMP until such time as Congress makes a determination regarding wilderness designation. The OHV and mechanized vehicle designations for WSAs would remain in effect until Congressional release of the WSAs, or until such time that actual or unforeseeable use levels may cause the nonimpairment criteria to be violated, in which case more restrictive designations may be made. Every effort will be made to maintain or create OHV and mechanized vehicle designations that will prevent impairment of wilderness values. Areas released from WSA status and not designated as wilderness would be evaluated and an appropriate OHV and mechanized vehicle designation proposed. Maintenance of an existing OHV and mechanized vehicle designation or change to a new designation would be based on laws, regulations, and policies in place at that time.

The limitations to OHV and mechanized vehicle use proposed under these alternatives do not apply to official use; any fire, military, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle when used for emergency purposes; any combat or combat support vehicle when used for national defense purposes; and any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized under a permit, lease, license, or contract.

Within the CMPA, all alternatives must abide by the Steens Act, specifically Section 112(b):

(1) PROHIBITION. – The use of motorized or mechanized vehicles on Federal lands included in the Cooperative Management and Protection Area –

(A) is prohibited off road; and

(B) is limited to such roads and trails as may be designated for their use as part of the management plan.

(2) EXCEPTIONS. – Paragraph (1) does not prohibit the use of motorized or mechanized vehicles on Federal lands included in the Cooperative Management and Protection Area if the Secretary determines that such use-

(A) is needed for administrative purposes or to respond to an emergency; or

(B) is appropriate for the construction or maintenance of agricultural facilities, fish and wildlife management, or ecological restoration projects, except in areas designated as wilderness or managed under the provisions of section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782).

The terms OHV, mechanized vehicle, road, and way are defined in the Glossary.

Outside of wilderness, access into seasonal closure areas by ranchers and private landowners would be authorized by the Field Manager for legitimate access or business purposes if weather and road conditions permit motorized vehicle travel on designated routes.

In the legend on DRMP/DEIS Maps 2.10 through 2.13 the phrase "Limited Seasonally/Closed" is used. At the scale of the maps, the road corridors that are bounded on one or both sides by the Steens Mountain Wilderness are not visible. These include, but are not limited to, the Steens Loop, Fish Creek, Cold Springs, Newton Cabin, and Indian Creek Roads. The Limited Seasonally designation refers to these road corridors. Rather than trying to show each of these road corridors individually as Limited Seasonally, the entire wilderness and the road corridors are labeled as "Limited Seasonally/Closed". However, motorized winter recreation would be allowed by winter recreation permit or SRP on those roads that are identified for such use in the comprehensive recreation plan. Until the comprehensive recreation plan is completed, winter use of the seasonally closed roads would continue in compliance with the 1993 Andrews Plan Amendment for Recreation Access Surrounding the Steens Mountain Loop Road and current winter recreation policy.

All roads in the AMU "limited" designation areas would be inventoried and a TP prepared after the RMP is completed. See the Transportation and Roads section for additional information.

Alternative A

Planning Area
OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be managed in accordance with the existing open, limited, and closed OHV designations in Table 2.19.1. OHV and mechanized vehicle organized events would be allowed when consistent with the protection of resource values and OHV and mechanized vehicle designations. In addition, the existing OHV designations for ACECs/RNAs would continue (Table 2.21.2). All OHV and mechanized vehicle use in WSAs is limited to existing, designated roads and ways. All WSA cherrystem roads and those ways identified in the WSA inventory would be available for use.

CMPA
CMPA OHV designations are shown in Table 2.19.2. The Fish Creek Road, Cold Springs Road, Newton Cabin Road, Bone Creek Road, Indian Creek Road, Weston Basin Road, and Big Alvord Creek Road would remain open. The existing seasonal closure in the Steens would continue. See DRMP/DEIS Map 2.9.

AMU
AMU OHV designations are shown in Table 2.19.3. The Alvord Desert playa would remain open to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. Snow would be allowed to block access to the Trout Creek Mountains and Arizona Creek/Stergen Meadows areas.

Alternative B

Planning Area
Areas designated as closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be maximized. All other areas would be designated as limited to designated roads with a minimum number of roads identified (Table 2.19.1 and DRMP/DEIS Map 2.10). All WSAs, including roads between WSAs, cherrystem roads, and ways, would be designated as closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. Organized OHV or mechanized vehicle events would not be allowed. Table 2.21.2 specifies the OHV and mechanized vehicle designations for the ACECs/RNAs.

CMPA
The following roads bounded by the Steens Mountain Wilderness would be designated as closed to all motorized and mechanized vehicle use: Fish Creek, Cold Springs, Steens Loop Road from the Kiger Overlook Road to west of Blitzen Crossing, Newton Cabin, Bone Creek, Indian Creek, Weston Basin Road, Dingle Creek Road, and Big Alvord Creek. The entire CMPA would be closed seasonally. A gate would be installed on the Moon Hill Road at the Diamond Grain Camp Road.

AMU
The Catlow Valley parcels, the Borax Lake area, and the Alvord Desert playa would be designated as closed to all OHV and mechanized vehicle use, while the remainder of the AMU would be designated as limited to designated routes. In addition, the Trout Creek Mountains and Arizona Creek/Stergen Meadows areas would be closed seasonally to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. Two gates would be installed on the Trout Creek Mountains Road. Gates would also be installed on the Ten Cent Meadows and Starr Ridge Roads.

Table 2.19.1: OHV Designation Acreages by Alternative in the Planning Area (Public Land Acres Only)

Designation	Alternative A (acres)	Alternative B (acres)	Alternative C (acres)	Proposed RMP (acres)	Alternative E (acres)
Open	675,914	0	0	25,285	683,968
Limited to Existing	123,455	0	0	0	535,666
Limited to Designated	680,017	795,706	1,476,034	1,451,685	257,454
Closed	170,084	853,764	173,436	172,500	172,382
TOTAL	**1,649,470**	**1,649,470**	**1,649,470**	**1,649,470**	**1,649,470**
Seasonal Closure	93,444	518,993	382,165	394,737	234,780

Table 2.19.2: OHV Designation Acreages by Alternative in the CMPA (Public Land Acres Only)

Designation	Alternative A (acres)	Alternative B (acres)	Alternative C (acres)	Proposed RMP (acres)	Alternative E (acres)
Open	0	0	0	0	0
Limited to Existing	120,310	0	0	0	0
Limited to Designated	137,762	136,983	256,849	256,853	256,853
Closed	170,084	291,173	171,307	171,303	171,303
TOTAL	**428,156**	**428,156**	**428,156**	**428,156**	**428,156**
Seasonal Closure	89,388	428,157	279,963	300,704	231,584

Alternative C

Planning Area
OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be minimized in accordance with the limited to designated routes and closed OHV designations (Table 2.19.1 and DRMP/DEIS Map 2.11). Emphasis would be on the protection of natural values. Organized OHV or mechanized vehicle events would be allowed only on designated roads within areas designated as limited. Table 2.21.2 specifies the OHV designations for the ACECs/RNAs. All WSA cherrystem roads and those ways identified in the WSA inventory would be available for use. Four parcels found to have wilderness characteristics would be designated as limited to designated roads for OHV and mechanized vehicle use.

Table 2.19.3: OHV Designation Acreages by Alternative in the AMU (Public Land Acres Only)

Designation	Alternative A (acres)	Alternative B (acres)	Alternative C (acres)	Proposed RMP (acres)	Alternative E (acres)
Open	675,914	0	0	25,285	683,968
Limited to Existing	3,145	0	0	0	535,666
Limited to Designated	542,255	658,723	1,219,185	1,194,832	601
Closed	0	562,591	2,129	1,197	1,079
TOTAL	**1,221,314**	**1,221,314**	**1,221,314**	**1,221,314**	**1,221,314**
Seasonal Closure	4,056	90,836	102,202	94,033	3,196

CMPA
The following roads bounded by the Steens Mountain Wilderness would be designated as closed to all motorized use: the Rooster Comb section of the Steens Loop Road, Fish Creek, Cold Springs from west of Nye Cabin to Riddle Bothers Ranch, and Bone Creek from the Carlson Creek intersection to the top of Whiskey Hill. The core of the CMPA would be closed seasonally with an additional gate installed on Moon Hill Road at the Diamond Grain Camp Road. The existing seasonal closure would be expanded to include all public lands affected by gate closures.

AMU
The Catlow Valley parcels and the Alvord Desert playa would be designated as closed to all OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The remainder of the AMU, including the WSAs, would be designated as limited to designated roads and ways for all OHV and mechanized vehicle use. In addition, the Trout Creek Mountains and Arizona Creek/Stergen Meadows areas would be closed seasonally to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. Two gates would be installed on the Trout Creek Mountains Road. Gates would also be installed on the Ten Cent Meadows and Starr Ridge Roads.

Proposed RMP

Planning Area
OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be cooperatively managed in accordance with OHV designations in Table 2.19.1 and Map 2.19.1. The BLM would seek cooperative agreements with OHV and mechanized vehicle clubs and other users. OHV and mechanized vehicle organized events would be allowed, when consistent with the protection of resource values and OHV and mechanized vehicle designations. The OHV and mechanized vehicle designations for ACECs/RNAs would be as specified in Table 2.21.2. All WSA cherrystem roads and those ways identified in the WSA inventory would be available for use.

CMPA
The Fish Creek Road, Cold Springs Road, Newton Cabin Road, Bone Creek Road, Indian Creek Road, and Big Alvord Creek Road would remain open. The core of the CMPA would be closed seasonally with an additional gate installed on Moon Hill Road approximately ten miles south of the Diamond Grain Camp Road. This gate would be closed when the Page Springs gate is closed. A second gate would be installed at the Diamond Grain Camp Road and would be closed from February 1 through May 15 of each year. The existing seasonal closure would be expanded to include all public lands affected by gate closures.

AMU
All WSAs would be designated as limited to designated roads and ways for OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The Catlow Valley parcels would be designated as closed to all OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The Alvord Desert playa would be designated as open to all OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The remainder of the AMU would be designated as limited to designated routes for all OHV and mechanized vehicle use. In addition, the Trout Creek Mountains and Arizona Creek/Stergen Meadows areas would be closed seasonally. Two gates would be installed on the Trout Creek Mountains Road. Gates would also be installed on the Ten Cent Meadows and Starr Ridge Roads.

Alternative E

Planning Area
OHV and mechanized vehicle opportunities would be maximized, except in areas designated closed or limited, in compliance with existing laws, regulations, and policies (Table 2.19.1 and DRMP/DEIS Map 2.13). Opportunities for organized OHV and mechanized vehicle events would be increased. OHV and mechanized vehicle designations for the ACECs/RNAs would be as specified in Table 2.21.2. All WSA cherrystem roads and those ways identified in the WSA inventory would be available for use.

CMPA
The Fish Creek Road, Cold Springs Road, Newton Cabin Road, Bone Creek Road, Indian Creek Road, and Big Alvord Creek Road would remain open. The upper Steens Mountain area would be closed seasonally. Motor vehicles would be allowed to the 5,600-foot elevation level on the North Steens Loop Road and to South Steens Campground on the South Steens Loop Road without winter recreation permits, when road conditions are suitable. A gate would be installed on the North Steens Loop Road at about the 5,600-foot elevation level.

AMU
All WSAs would be designated as limited to existing roads and ways for OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The Catlow Valley parcels would be designated as closed to all OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The Borax Lake area would be designated as limited to designated roads and ways for OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The Alvord Desert playa and the remainder of the AMU would be designated as open for OHV and mechanized vehicle use. Snow would be allowed to block access to the Trout Creek Mountains and Arizona Creek/Stergen Meadows areas.

2.19.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.20 Recreation

2.20.1 Goal - Provide developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities, while protecting resources, to manage the increasing demand for resource dependent recreation activities.

2.20.1.1 Management Framework

The FLPMA provides for recreation use of public land as an integral part of multiple use management. Dispersed, unstructured activities typify the recreational uses occurring throughout the majority of the Planning Area. Policy guidelines in BLM Manual 8300 direct the BLM to designate special units known as Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs). Management within these SRMAs focuses on providing recreation opportunities that would not otherwise be available to the public, reducing conflicts among users, minimizing damage to resources, and reducing visitor health and safety problems. Major investments in recreation facilities and visitor assistance are appropriate in SRMAs when required to meet management objectives.

Public lands in a RA not designated as SRMAs become an Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). Management direction within an ERMA focuses on actions to facilitate recreation opportunities by providing basic information and access. Visitors to an ERMA are expected to rely heavily on their own equipment, knowledge, and skills while participating in recreation activities.

In accordance with the FLPMA, the "BLM's Recreation 2000 Plan and Update" sets recreation policy on the national level. The policy emphasizes resource dependent recreation opportunities that typify the vast western landscape; striving

to meet the social and economic needs of present and future generations; providing for the health and safety of the visitor; and accomplishing these goals within the constraints of achieving and maintaining healthy ecosystems.

2.20.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective 1. Establish and manage recreation areas where the presence of high quality natural resources and the current or potential demand warrants intensive management practices to protect areas for their scientific, educational, or recreational values while accommodating anticipated increases in use for recreation activities in specific areas.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Throughout the Planning Area, occupancy and use for recreational camping is limited to 14 days in one location.

All lands not designated as SRMA(s) would become an ERMA.

Alternative A

The CMPA would be managed as an undesignated SRMA (see Map 2.20.1). The Steens Mountain Recreation Lands designation would be maintained.

Alternative B

Recreation management would be kept to a minimal level. SRMAs would not be designated. Congressionally and administratively designated areas (CMPA, WSRs, Steens Mountain Wilderness, WSAs, etc.) would be subject to a minimum level of management. The Steens Mountain Recreation Lands designation would be removed.

Alternative C

The CMPA, 94,897 acres in the Pueblo Mountains, and 92,927 acres in the Trout Creek Mountains would be designated as SRMAs (see DRMP/DEIS Map 2.15). The Trout Creek Mountains and Pueblo Mountains SRMAs would be managed with an emphasis on undeveloped, dispersed recreation opportunities and protection of natural values, while providing an associated level of support facilities. The Steens Mountain Recreation Lands designation would be removed.

Proposed RMP

The CMPA, 94,897 acres in the Pueblo Mountains, and 92,927 acres in the Trout Creek Mountains would be designated as SRMAs (see Map 2.21.1). The Pueblo Mountains and the Trout Creek Mountains SRMAs would be managed to provide quality recreation opportunities while protecting resource values. The Steens Mountain Recreation Lands designation would be removed.

Alternative E

The CMPA, 94,897 acres in the Pueblo Mountains, and 92,927 acres in the Trout Creek Mountains would be designated as SRMAs (see DRMP/DEIS Map 2.14). The Pueblo Mountains and the Trout Creek Mountains SRMAs would be managed to improve tourism and recreation opportunities. The Steens Mountain Recreation Lands designation would be removed.

Objective 2. Manage recreation facilities to protect natural resources and to meet user needs.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Management and maintenance of existing developed recreation sites would continue.

Maintenance of and repairs to existing facilities and design of any new facilities would incorporate Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

Alternative A

Planning Area
Expansion of existing developed recreation sites would be considered and tourism opportunities would be provided.

CMPA
The Mann Lake Recreation Site would be maintained in its present condition. Existing horse trailhead facilities at South Steens Campground would be maintained. Toilet(s) would not be installed along the North Steens Loop Road. A group camping area would not be developed nor would facilities for winter recreation. Lily Lake would continue to be managed as a dispersed recreation site. Trail access would not be provided to the Fir Grove.

AMU
New campgrounds would not be developed nor would toilets be installed at Pike Creek or Frog Spring. Trailhead parking would be provided near the mouth of Wildhorse Canyon.

Alternative B

Planning Area
Undeveloped recreation sites would be minimally managed. If natural processes are being jeopardized, undeveloped sites would be rehabilitated or closed.

CMPA
The Mann Lake Recreation Site would be maintained in its present condition. Existing horse trailhead facilities at South Steens Campground would be maintained. Toilet(s) would not be installed along the North Steens Loop Road. A group camping area would not be developed, nor would facilities for winter recreation. Lily Lake would be designated as a day use area. Trail access would not be provided to the Fir Grove.

AMU
New campgrounds would not be developed nor would toilets be installed at Pike Creek or Frog Spring. A staging area would not be provided adjacent to the Penland Road.

Alternative C

Planning Area
Recreation management would focus on dispersed activities, while assuring the protection of natural and cultural values. Recreation developments would be allowed only for the protection and interpretation of cultural and natural values and to provide for public health and safety. If resource values are affected beyond acceptable levels, undeveloped site(s) would be rehabilitated or closed.

CMPA
The Mann Lake Recreation Site would be maintained in its present condition. Existing horse trailhead facilities at South Steens Campground would be maintained. One toilet would be installed and maintained along the North Steens Loop Road in the Fish Lake area. A group camping area would be developed within the confines of an existing campground. A nonmotorized winter recreation staging area would be developed along the North Steens Loop Road. Lily Lake would be designated as a day use area and interpretive signs would be installed. The route to the Fir Grove would be minimally maintained to protect natural values and provide for public safety.

AMU
New campgrounds would not be developed. Toilets would be installed at Pike Creek and Frog Spring. A staging area would be provided adjacent to the Penland Road.

Proposed RMP

Planning Area
Management of existing recreation sites, areas, and their associated improvements would continue and site expansion would be allowed. If demand warrants, new recreation sites and areas would be developed to protect cultural and natural values and provide for public health and safety. Tourism opportunities would be allowed if consistent with other resource objectives.

CMPA
Any facilities or actions to accommodate or manage the existing or anticipated recreation use would be addressed and analyzed in a comprehensive recreation plan that would be prepared after the RMP is completed. Facilities or actions that would be addressed for this management objective include Mann Lake Recreation Site, South Steens Loop Road trailhead facility and connector trails, Lily Lake, North Steens Loop Road toilet, winter use staging area, cross-country ski trail system (when there is demonstrated public interest), and a possible Fir Grove Trail. Decisions on other potential projects would be considered as part of the comprehensive recreation plan. Actions or facilities needed to protect public health and safety and to maintain existing facilities, as well as cooperative actions with private landowners or cooperative facilities on private lands, could be assessed and implemented prior to completion of the comprehensive recreation plan.

AMU
Any proposed facilities would be further analyzed in site specific recreation project plans. Possible project plans could be written for the Frog Springs area, Pike Creek, and the Penland Road.

Alternative E

Planning Area
Tourism opportunities would be increased through the expansion of existing developed and undeveloped recreation sites. New developed recreation sites and areas would be established to meet increased recreation demand.

CMPA
The Mann Lake Recreation Site would be upgraded to a full service campground. A trailhead facility (parking, hitching rail, loading ramp, information) for horse users would be developed near the South Steens Campground. Trails connecting the new trailhead to existing trails would be designed and constructed. Toilets would be installed and maintained at the three overlooks at the top of the Steens Loop Road. In cooperation with private land owners, a group camping area would be developed east of Fish Lake. A winter use staging area would be developed along the North Steens Loop Road. A system of cross-country ski trails and a nonmotorized winter play area would be developed at the west end of the WJMA. Lily Lake would be managed as a dispersed recreation site and a toilet would be installed. A small trailhead would be developed adjacent to the North Steens Loop Road and the route to the Fir Grove would be marked and minimally maintained.

AMU
A developed campground would be constructed in the Frog Spring area. A toilet would be installed and maintained at Pike Creek, in cooperation with the private land owner. A staging area with information, a toilet, and horse support facilities would be provided adjacent to the Penland Road.

Objective 3. Outside of the intensive use areas and developed recreation sites, manage the remainder of the Planning Area for dispersed recreation.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Maintenance of and repairs to existing facilities and design of any new facilities would incorporate Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

Alternative A

Planning Area
Management of existing undeveloped recreation sites would continue. Public safety and resource protection would be provided. Dispersed tourism opportunities would be developed.

CMPA
Trails would not be developed outside of the Steens Mountain Wilderness.

Alternative B

Planning Area
Existing undeveloped recreation sites would be minimally managed and natural processes would be protected. If natural processes are being jeopardized, site(s) would be rehabilitated or closed.

CMPA
Trails would not be developed outside of the Steens Mountain Wilderness.

Alternative C

Planning Area
Existing undeveloped recreation sites would be minimally managed. Recreation management would focus on dispersed activities while protecting natural and cultural values and providing for public health and safety. If resource values are affected beyond acceptable levels, site(s) or would be rehabilitated or closed.

CMPA
Outside of the Steens Mountain Wilderness, trails would be developed where necessary to protect natural values.

Proposed RMP

Planning Area
Natural and cultural values would be protected while providing for public safety. Dispersed recreation opportunities, that are consistent with other resource objectives, would be developed.

CMPA
Any additional facilities or actions to accommodate or manage the existing or anticipated recreation use would be addressed and analyzed in a comprehensive recreation plan that would be prepared after the RMP is completed. Facilities or actions that would be addressed for this management objective include trails outside of the Steens Mountain Wilderness when there is demonstrated public interest. Decisions on other potential projects would be considered as part of the comprehensive recreation plan.

Alternative E

Planning Area
Tourism opportunities would be increased through management of undeveloped recreation sites and by providing additional opportunities for dispersed recreation.

CMPA
Outside of the Steens Mountain Wilderness, trails would be developed to provide additional hiking and nonmotorized recreation opportunities.

Objective 4. Manage visitor use in the Planning Area to protect natural resources and to provide a variety of recreation opportunities.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Maintenance of and repairs to existing facilities and design of any new facilities would incorporate Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

The current access management to the Riddle Brothers Ranch would be continued.

Alternative A

Planning Area
Visitor use would be managed for unlimited recreation opportunities. Group size would not be limited for any recreation activity.

CMPA
Camping locations would not be restricted. Parking on the Rooster Comb section of the South Steens Loop Road would not be restricted. Snowmobile use would be limited as follows: Snowmobiles are allowed on the North Steens Loop Road from the 5,600-foot level to the Kiger Overlook. An authorized guide must accompany snowmobilers to the Nye Place and along the Dingle Creek road. Nonmotorized boating on the mainstem Donner und Blitzen River would only be

allowed when the lowest gate on the South Steens Loop Road is open. Visitor use at the overlooks would not be restricted. Permits would not be required to visit the CMPA.

AMU
Camping would be allowed anywhere, including all AMU ACECs/RNAs and Mickey Hot Springs. Dispersed users would be allowed to use whatever method of solid human waste disposal they prefer. Routes for mechanized vehicles (i.e., mountain bikes) would not be developed.

Alternative B

Planning Area
Visitor use would be managed for minimum recreation opportunities through closures, regulations, or other means, to maximize natural processes. Group size would be limited for all activities in order to allow natural processes to be unimpaired.

CMPA
The following areas would be closed to camping: all RNAs, the Steens Loop Road above the Jackman Park and South Steens Campgrounds, the Wildhorse Overlook Road, all overlooks, Wildhorse Lake basin, and all areas above timberline within view of the Steens Loop Road. Camping would be allowed only in developed campgrounds (outside the Steens Mountain Wilderness). All snowmobile use in the CMPA would be eliminated. The existing permit system for nonmotorized winter recreation would be continued. Nonmotorized boating on the mainstem Donner und Blitzen River would not be allowed. Visitor use at the overlooks would be restricted to designated trails, and the interpretive signs would be moved to the parking lots. Permits would be required for all CMPA users.

AMU
Mickey Hot Springs would be closed to camping. Dispersed users would be required to pack out all solid human waste. Routes for mechanized vehicles (i.e., mountain bikes) would not be developed.

Alternative C

Planning Area
Visitor use would be managed to protect natural values. Group size would be limited.

CMPA
The following areas would be closed to camping: all RNAs, the Steens Loop Road above the Jackman Park and South Steens Campgrounds, the Wildhorse Overlook Road, all overlooks, and Wildhorse Lake basin. Camping would be allowed only in developed campgrounds and designated dispersed sites (outside the Steens Mountain Wilderness). All snowmobile use associated with the North Steens Loop Road would be eliminated. The existing permit system for nonmotorized winter recreation would be continued. Nonmotorized boating on the mainstem Donner und Blitzen River would be allowed only when the lowest gate on the South Steens Loop Road is open and only if it does not affect the WSR Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs). Visitor use at overlooks would be restricted to designated trails, and the interpretive signs would be moved to the parking lots. Permits would be required for all Steens Loop Road users.

AMU
All AMU RNAs and Mickey Hot Springs would be closed to camping. Toilets would be installed and maintained at Pike Creek and Frog Spring. Dispersed users would be encouraged to pack out all solid human waste. Routes for mechanized vehicles (i.e., mountain bikes) would not be developed.

Proposed RMP

Planning Area
Visitor use would be managed in a manner that encourages economic growth and cooperative management practices for recreation opportunities that are consistent with other resource objectives. Group size limits would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

CMPA
Close the Kiger Gorge, East Rim, and Wildhorse Overlook parking areas to camping and overnight use. The Rooster Comb would be closed to parking or stopping, except at designated locations; a small pullout would be developed at the

east end of the Rooster Comb. Visitors would be encouraged to stay on designated trails at the overlooks and the interpretive signs would be moved to the parking lots. Any additional facilities or actions to accommodate or manage the existing or anticipated recreation use would be addressed in a comprehensive recreation plan that would be prepared after the RMP is completed. Facilities or actions that would be addressed and analyzed for this management objective include motorized and nonmotorized winter recreation, dispersed camping, nonmotorized boating on the mainstem Donner und Blitzen River, Blitzen Crossing day-use designation, and permits to visit the CMPA. Decisions on other potential projects would be considered as part of the comprehensive recreation plan.

AMU
All AMU RNAs and Mickey Hot Springs would be closed to camping. Any proposed facilities or actions would be further analyzed in site specific recreation project plans. Possible project plans could be written for the Frog Springs area, Pike Creek, other dispersed campsites, and mountain bike trails. Dispersed users would be encouraged to pack out all solid human waste.

Alternative E

Planning Area
Visitor use would be managed to maximize recreation opportunities that are consistent with other resource objectives. Group size would not be limited for any recreation activity.

CMPA
Camping would be allowed anywhere, unless otherwise restricted. The Rooster Comb would be closed to parking or stopping, except at designated overlooks; a small pullout would be developed at the east end of the Rooster Comb. Snowmobile use would be allowed on all designated roads. The existing permit system for winter recreation would be continued. A river access system similar to the existing winter use permit system would be implemented, with the number of users not limited. Visitor use at the overlooks would not be restricted. The interpretive signs would be moved to the parking lots. Permits would not be required to visit the CMPA.

AMU
Mickey Hot Springs would be closed to camping. Toilets would be installed and maintained at Pike Creek, Frog Spring, and other dispersed campsites throughout the AMU. Other dispersed users would be encouraged to pack out all solid human waste. Routes for mechanized vehicles (i.e., mountain bikes) would be developed as demand warrants.

Objective 5. Provide information and educational opportunities to public land visitors.

Alternative A

Information (i.e., maps and brochures) and education opportunities would be provided to improve visitors' experiences. The current informational and directional sign installation and maintenance program would continue.

Alternative B

Information (i.e., maps and brochures) and education opportunities would be provided to improve visitors' experiences. New sign placement would be minimized. Existing signs would be maintained and replaced only as needed for public health and safety or resource protection.

Alternative C

Information (i.e., maps and brochures) and education opportunities would be provided to improve visitors' experiences. New sign placement would be minimized. Existing signs would be maintained and replaced and new signs installed only as needed for public health and safety or resource protection.

Proposed RMP

Information (i.e., maps and brochures) and education opportunities would be provided to improve visitors' experiences. In the CMPA, existing signs would be maintained and replaced and new signs installed only as needed for public health and safety or resource protection. In the AMU, signs would be installed, maintained, and replaced as needed.

Alternative E

Extensive information and education opportunities would be provided to increase tourism activities. Signs would be installed, maintained, and replaced to maximize public safety and confidence.

Objective 6. Manage commercial, competitive, educational, and organized group recreation activities.

Alternative A

CMPA
SRPs for commercial, competitive, and organized group activities would be issued on a case-by-case basis.

AMU
SRPs for commercial, competitive, and organized group activities would be issued on a case-by-case basis. SRPs for organized group and commercial use of the Alvord Desert playa could be issued if the wilderness values of the Alvord Desert WSA would not be impaired.

Alternative B

CMPA
Existing, long-term SRPs would be managed and renewed in conformance with existing laws and regulations. No new SRPs would be issued.

AMU
Existing SRPs would be cancelled and new SRPs would not be issued. SRPs would not be issued for the Alvord Desert playa.

Alternative C

CMPA
SRPs would be issued as needed to meet the demand for permits, while protecting cultural and natural resource values and providing for public safety. Allocations, such as limits on party size, number of trips, or number of permittees, would be implemented.

AMU
SRPs would be issued as needed to meet the demand for permits, while protecting cultural and natural resource values and providing for public safety. If needed, allocations such as limits on party size, number of trips, or number of permittees, would be implemented. SRPs would not be issued for the Alvord Desert playa.

Proposed RMP

CMPA
Outside of the Steens Mountain Wilderness, SRPs would be issued as needed to meet the demand for permits, while protecting cultural and natural resource values and providing for public safety. If needed, allocations such as limits on party size, number of trips, or number of permittees, would be implemented.

AMU
SRPs would be issued as needed to meet the demand for permits, while protecting cultural and natural resource values and providing for public safety. If needed, allocations such as limits on party size, number of trips or number of permittees, would be implemented. SRPs for organized group and commercial use of the Alvord Desert playa could be issued if the wilderness values of the Alvord Desert WSA would not be impaired.

Alternative E

CMPA
Commercial, competitive, and organized group opportunities and activities would be emphasized through the issuance of SRPs.

AMU
Commercial, competitive, and organized group opportunities and activities would be emphasized through the issuance of SRPs. SRPs for organized group, commercial, and competitive use of the Alvord Desert playa could be issued if the wilderness values of the Alvord Desert WSA would not be impaired.

Objective 7. Manage Back Country Byways (BCBs) to protect the recognized values.

Alternative A

Planning Area
Existing BCBs would be managed in conformance with existing laws and regulations.

CMPA
Vehicle pullouts would not be constructed along the Steens Loop Road.

Alternative B

Planning Area
Current BCBs would be eliminated and new BCBs would not be designated. The Steens Mountain BCB designation would be removed because the Steens Loop Road would be closed from the Kiger Overlook turnoff to west of the Blitzen River.

CMPA
Vehicle pullouts would not be constructed along the Steens Loop Road.

Alternative C

Planning Area
Existing BCBs would be managed in conformance with existing laws and regulations.

CMPA
Vehicle pullouts would not be constructed along the Steens Loop Road.

Proposed RMP

Planning Area
Existing BCBs would be managed in conformance with existing laws and regulations. Interpretive management plans for existing BCBs would be developed and implemented. Additional byways or scenic tour routes that support cooperative management would be designated.

CMPA
Any additional facilities or actions to accommodate or manage the existing or anticipated recreation use would be addressed and analyzed in a comprehensive recreation plan that would be prepared after the RMP is completed. Facilities or actions that would be addressed for this management objective include vehicle pullouts. Decisions on other potential projects would be considered as part of the comprehensive recreation plan.

Alternative E

Planning Area
Existing BCBs would be managed in conformance with existing laws and regulations. Interpretive management plans for existing BCBs would be developed and implemented. Additional byways or scenic tour routes that support cooperative management would be designated. New BCBs would be designated to increase tourism potential and accommodate anticipated growth in driving for pleasure.

CMPA
Vehicle pullouts would be constructed at regular intervals along the Steens Loop Road.

Objective 8. Manage the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail to protect the recognized values and setting.

Alternative A

Management would continue under the current MOU with the Desert Trail Association. Trailhead facilities would not be developed.

Alternative B

The Desert Trail Association MOU would be cancelled and the trail corridor would be removed from maps. Trailhead facilities would not be developed.

Alternative C

Management would continue under the current MOU with the Desert Trail Association. Minimal trailhead facilities would be installed at Domingo Pass and Frog Spring.

Proposed RMP

Management would continue under the current MOU with the Desert Trail Association. Any proposed facilities would be further analyzed in site specific recreation project plans. Possible project plans could be written for minimal trailhead facilities at Domingo Pass, Frog Spring, near Denio, and Fields.

Alternative E

Management would continue under the current MOU with the Desert Trail Association. Complete trailhead facilities would be installed at Domingo Pass, near Denio, and at Frog Spring. In cooperation with the Fields Store, facilities at Fields would be installed.

2.20.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.21 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

2.21.1 Goal - Retain existing and designate new ACECs where relevance and importance criteria are met and special management is required to protect the identified values.

2.21.1.1 Management Framework

Section 202(c)(3) of the FLPMA mandates that priority be given to the designation and protection of ACECs. These areas are defined in section 103(a) as areas where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important values, resources, systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.

Appendix K contains a description of each existing and proposed ACEC including the relevant and important values of each area. The ACEC designations and acreages for each Alternative are listed in Table 2.21.1. The ACECs to be designated in the Proposed RMP are shown on Map 2.21.1.

Specific management actions that differ for alternatives within each existing or proposed ACEC are discussed under the heading for that ACEC. Actions are not separated by management objective as with other sections in this chapter. The common management actions are those that would be conducted in the same manner where they are identified as part of an ACEC alternative. All of the management actions are outlined in Table 2.21.2, Management Prescriptions for Each ACEC by Alternative. The following are the management actions that would apply to more than one ACEC and to more than one Alternative.

Summary of ACEC Designation: Under Alternative A, no new ACECs would be designated and those existing, totaling 132,112 acres, would be retained. Under Alternatives B and E, all existing ACEC designations would be revoked and

one new ACEC, Mickey Hot Springs, would be designated for a total of 42 acres. Management under Alternative B for the areas where ACEC designations were revoked would be the same as applied across the Planning Area. Under Alternative C, all of the 15 existing ACECs would be retained, with additions and deletions, and six proposed ACECs would be designated, for a total of 143,426 acres. Under the Proposed RMP, 12 of the existing ACECs would be retained, with additions and deletions, while the designation of three of the existing ACECs (Alvord Peak, Pickett Rim and Steens Mountain) would be revoked. Five new ACECs would be designated for a total of 66,870 acres.

Research Natural Areas: RNAs are managed to preserve natural features and ecosystems in as natural a condition as possible, for research and educational purposes that relate to the Research Natural Area (RNA) values. All RNAs shall be designated ACECs and follow the ACEC designation guidance provided by the BLM Manual. Nine of the 15 existing ACECs in the Planning Area are RNA/ACECs.

Special Status Plant and Animal Species: Disturbances to all special status plant and animal populations would be avoided in all ACECs where they occur. General inventories, monitoring, and research would continue for special status plants. Conservation agreements would be written for listed plant species or those in danger of being listed.

Fire management in ACECs: Under the Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, C, and E, in all ACECs and RNAs, wildland fires would be managed according to appropriate management response; however, some ACECs would be analyzed for possible wildland fire use. Use of heavy equipment in ACECs, WSAs, and RNAs would be avoided and would require line officer approval. Use of retardant would be allowed within these areas for initial attack. Retardant use during an extended attack would be considered as a part of the wildland fire situation analysis, considering the resource values at risk. If used, heavy equipment would be restricted to existing roads and ways. Prescribed fires would be used in ACECs where they would preserve the desired characteristics of the ACEC and meet management objectives.

Weed management in ACECs: Noxious weeds would be aggressively controlled using integrated weed management methods such as biological control, site specific spraying, and grubbing by hand that are consistent with protection and promotion of relevant and important values. Any weed control measures proposed in WSAs within ACECs would be consistent with WSA IMP direction. Weed control measures proposed within wilderness or WSRs would be consistent with legislation covering those areas.

*WSA management in ACEC*s: All management actions for those portions of the ACEC within a WSA would be governed by the WSA IMP until such time as Congress makes a determination regarding wilderness designation for that WSA. Any WSAs, or portions thereof, designated as an ACEC and later released from WSA status would be managed according to the applicable management direction for that ACEC. Under some alternatives, the proposed ACEC management within WSAs may be more restrictive than the WSA IMP, such as closing an area to livestock grazing or limiting vehicle use to designated roads and ways rather than existing roads and ways. Nine proposed or existing ACECs overlap with existing WSAs.

Wilderness and WSRs in ACECs: All management actions for ACECs located within wilderness or WSRs would be governed by the Wilderness Act or the WSR Act as amended.

Nondestructive research: Nondestructive research is encouraged in all of the proposed and existing ACECs and is not limited only to those areas that have RNAs. Any research would need to be authorized by the BLM in writing and where necessary, subject to the permit process. It is assumed that the resultant data and information gathered would be shared with the BLM to help guide management of these areas.

Recreation: Recreational activities are not encouraged within ACECs unless the ACEC was designated with recreational use in mind. Commercial use, or use requiring a special permit, that occurs or is proposed within an ACEC would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and would be permitted, modified, or prohibited as needed to protect the ACEC values. Camping would be prohibited in RNA/ACECs, except at specified RNAs under specific alternatives. Camping would be allowed in ACECs.

Minerals (Leasable, Locatable, Salable): According to 43 CFR 3809.11, an approved plan of operations is required prior to commencing any operation, other than casual use, involving locatable minerals in a designated ACEC, regardless of the size of the disturbed area.

2.21.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Retain and manage existing ACECs if they meet relevance and importance criteria and require special management or protection.

Alvord Desert ACEC

Alternative A

The existing ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 17,933 acres. Since the ACEC is entirely within the Alvord Desert WSA, the visual resources are managed as VRM Class I. The roads that run through the ACEC are maintained regularly due to important access considerations. Road maintenance is limited to the existing roadbed. OHV and mechanized vehicle use is limited to the designated roads and the small portion of playa lakebed within the ACEC. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations are avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The ACEC is located within the Alvord Grazing Allotment and is open to grazing from December to April. Since the ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area.

Alternative C

The ACEC would be retained and an additional 3,682 acres added, making the total designation 21,615 acres. The road through the ACEC would be maintained as needed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. The ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations except for access needs to nonpublic property.

The area within the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or improved. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The existing ACEC would be retained and an additional 3,682 acres added, making the total designation 21,615 acres. The road through the ACEC would be maintained as needed. Road maintenance would be limited to the existing roadbed. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class I.

The area within the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or improved. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Table 2.21.1: Areas Of Critical Environmental Concern Acres by Alternative

	Located in Withdrawal Area	Located in CMPA	Located in AMU	Alternative A Acres	Alternative B Acres	Alternative C Acres	Proposed RMP Acres	Alternative E Acres
EXISTING ACEC								
Alvord Desert ACEC	Yes	No	Yes	17,933	0	21,615	21,615	0
Alvord Peak ACEC	Yes	Yes	No	14,040	0	14,040	0	0
Borax Lake ACEC	Yes	No	Yes	520	0	600	600	0
East Kiger Plateau RNA/ACEC	Yes	Yes	No	1,216	0	1,216	1,216	0
Kiger Mustang ACEC	Yes[2]	Yes[2]	No	31,725	0	31,725	31,725	0
Little Wildhorse Lake RNA/ACEC	Yes	Yes	No	241	0	241	241	0
Little Blitzen RNA/ACEC	Yes	Yes	No	2,530	0	2,255	2,255	0
Long Draw RNA/ACEC	No	No	Yes	441	0	441	441	0
Mickey Basin RNA/ACEC	Yes	No	Yes	560	0	560	560	0
Pickett Rim ACEC	No	No	Yes	3,941	0	3,941	0	0
Pueblo Foothills RNA/ACEC	No	No	Yes	2,503	0	2,424	2,424	0
Rooster Comb RNA/ACEC	Yes	Yes	No	716	0	683	683	0
South Fork Willow Creek RNA/ACEC	Yes	Yes	No	231	0	186	186	0
Steens Mountain ACEC	Yes	Yes	No	57,501	0	57,501	0	0
Tum Tum Lake RNA/ACEC	No	No	Yes	2,064	0	1,689	1,689	0
TOTAL EXISTING ACEC ACRES[1]				**136,162**	**0**	**139,117**	**63,635**	**0**
PROPOSED ACEC								
Big Alvord Creek RNA/ACEC	Yes	Yes	No	0	0	1,676	1,676	0
Catlow Redband Trout ACEC	Yes	Yes	No	0	0	6,800	0	0
East Fork Trout Creek RNA/ACEC	No	No	Yes	0	0	361	361	0
Fir Groves ACEC	Yes	Yes	No	0	0	477	477	0
Mickey Hot Springs ACEC	Yes	No	Yes	0	42	42	42	42
Serrano Point RNA/ACEC	Yes	No	Yes	0	0	679	679	0
TOTAL EXISTING & PROPOSED[1]				**136,162**	**42**	**149,152**	**66,870**	**42**
ACEC OVERLAP ACRES[3]				**4,050**	**0**	**5,726**	**0**	**0**
TOTAL ACEC ACRES				**132,112**	**42**	**143,426**	**66,870**	**42**

[1]The total ACEC acres include areas of overlap with each ACEC total accounted for.
[2]Part of the Kiger Mustang ACEC is in the Withdrawal Area and the CMPA (31,859 acres), and the rest is in the Three Rivers RA.
[3]To eliminate double counting acres, the ACEC overlap areas are accounted for and deducted.

Table 2.21.2: Management Prescriptions for Each ACEC by Alternative

							Wood/ Plant Collect		Minerals		
ACEC	**Alternative**	**Acres**	**ROWs**	**OHV**	**VRM**	**Grazing**		**Roads**	**Leasable**	**Locatable**	**Salable**
Alvord Desert	A	17,933	AV	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	21,615	E	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	21,615	AV	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	W	C
	E	-									
Alvord Peak	A	14,040	E	C	I	O	L	NA	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	14,040	E	C	I	O	L	NA	NL	W	C
	PRMP	-									
	E	-									
Borax Lake	A	520	O	Ld	III	O	O	L	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	600	E	C	II	O/C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	PRMP	600	AV	Ld	II	O/C	L	L	NL	W	C
	E										
Pickett Rim	A	3,941	O	Ld	II	O	O	L	O	O	O
	B	-									
	C	3,941	E	Ld	II	O	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	-									
	E	-									
Steens Mountain	A	57,501	E/AV/O	C/Ld	I/II	O/C	L	L	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	57,501	E	C/Ld	I	O/C	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	-									
	E	-									
Kiger Mustang	A	31,725	AV/E	O/Ld	I/IV	O	O	L	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	31,725	E	Ld	I/II	O	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	31,725	AV	Ld	I/III	O	O	L	NL	W	C

							Wood/ Plant Collect		Minerals		
ACEC	**Alternative**	**Acres**	**ROWs**	**OHV**	**VRM**	**Grazing**		**Roads**	**Leasable**	**Locatable**	**Salable**
	E	-									
East Kiger Plateau RNA	A	1,216	AV/E	C	I	O/C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	1,216	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	PRMP	1,216	AV/E	C	I	O/C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	E	-									
Little Blitzen RNA	A	2,530	E	C	I	C	L	L	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	2,255	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	PRMP	2,255	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	E	-									
Little Wildhorse Lake	A	241	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	241	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	PRMP	241	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	E	-									
Long Draw RNA	A	441	AV	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	O	C
	B	-									
	C	441	E	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	441	AV	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	O	C
	E	-									
Mickey Basin RNA	A	560	AV	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	560	E	Ld	I	O/C	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	560	AV	Ld	I	O/C	L	L	NL	W	C
	E	-									
Pueblo Foothills RNA	A	2,503	AV	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	O	C
	B	-									
	C	2,424	E	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	2,424	AV	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	O	C
	E	-									

							Wood/ Plant Collect		Minerals		
ACEC	**Alternative**	**Acres**	**ROWs**	**OHV**	**VRM**	**Grazing**		**Roads**	**Leasable**	**Locatable**	**Salable**
Rooster Comb RNA	A	716	E	C	I	C	L	L	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	683	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	PRMP	683	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	E	-									
South Fork Willow Cr RNA	A	231	E	C	I	C	L	L	NL	W	C
	B	-									
	C	186	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	PRMP	186	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	E	-									
Tum Tum Lake RNA	A	2,064	O	Ld	III	O	L	L	O	O	O
	B	-									
	C	1,689	E	Ld	II	C	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	1,689	AV	Ld	II	C	L	L	O	O	C
	E										
East Fork Trout Cr RNA	A	-									
	B	-									
	C	361	E	Ld	I	C	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	361	AV	Ld	I	O	L	L	NL	O	C
	E	-									
Mickey Hot Springs	A	-									
	B	42	E	C	I/II	C	O	NA	NL	W	C
	C	42	E	C	I/II	C	O	NA	NL	W	C
	PRMP	42	AV	C	I/II	C	O	NA	NL	W	C
	E	42	AV	C	I/II	C	O	NA	NL	W	C
Serrano Point RNA	A	-									
	B	-									
	C	679	E	Ld	II	C	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	679	AV	Ld	II	O	L	L	NL	W	C
	E	-									

									Minerals		
ACEC	Alternative	Acres	ROWs	OHV	VRM	Grazing	Wood/ Plant Collect	Roads	Leasable	Locatable	Salable
Big Alvord Cr RNA	A	-									
	B	-									
	C	1,676	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	PRMP	1,676	E	C	I	C	L	NA	NL	W	C
	E	-									
Fir Groves	A	-									
	B	-									
	C	477	E	Ld	II	C	L	L	NL	W	C
	PRMP	477	AV	Ld	II	O	L	L	NL	W	C
	E	-									
Catlow Redband Trout	A	-									
	B	-									
	C	6,800	E	C/Ld	I/II	O	L	NA	NL	W	C
	PRMP	-									
	E	-									

AV-Avoidance area for ROWs.
C - Closed to mineral material removal, OHV and mechanized vehicle use, or grazing.
E - Exclusion area for ROWs.

Ld - OHV and mechanized vehicle use limited to designated routes.
L - Limited; with limitations applicable to plant collection and road maintenance.
NL - No Lease; Not available for mineral leasing.
NA - Not applicable; no roads occur here so road maintenance does not apply.

O - Open; the activity is allowed in the area. In the case of locatable minerals within WSAs, the area is open to location of mining claims but is still subject to the WSA IMP nonimpairment criteria.
W - Withdrawn from mineral exploration and development.

Alt A - Present Management; No Action
Alt B - Exclude commodity production
Alt C - Emphasize natural values
PRMP - Balances commodity and natural values
Alt E - Emphasize commodity production

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area.

Alvord Peak ACEC

Alternatives A and C

The existing ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size of the ACEC would remain at 14,040 acres. Since the ACEC is entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, the area would be managed as VRM Class I.

The roads through the ACEC are closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use due to wilderness designation. Road maintenance is not an issue. The Alvord Peak ACEC is an exclusion area for new ROWs and other realty use authorizations unless access is needed to nonpublic property.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The ACEC is located within the Alvord Peak Grazing Allotment and is open to grazing from April to November. Grazing is under the control of existing permit stipulations and the approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or improved. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection or removal of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize natural processes. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Proposed RMP

The ACEC designation would be revoked. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Borax Lake ACEC

Alternative A

The existing ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 520 acres. The visual resources would continue to be managed as VRM Class III within the ACEC. OHV and mechanized vehicle use in the ACEC is limited to designated roads. The roads within the ACEC are maintained as needed for access. The area is open to new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Most of the ACEC is fenced, and that portion of the ACEC inside the fence is open to livestock grazing, but the area has not been grazed for several years. A total of 120 acres of the ACEC is outside the fence in the Tule Springs Grazing Allotment. This area is grazed in the winter by cattle and wild horses, but grazing animals rarely reach that part of the allotment containing the ACEC. The ACEC is open to collection of plant materials.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. Management of the Borax Lake area would be the same as prescribed for the adjacent area.

Alternative C

The existing ACEC designation would be retained and 80 acres added, making the total designation 600 acres. The area would be closed to motorized and mechanized vehicle access. No new ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be allowed. The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class II.

The ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area within the fenced exclosure would be closed to livestock grazing. Livestock grazing and wild horse use would continue on 120 acres of the ACEC outside the fenced exclosure. Livestock use would be managed under the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection or removal of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The existing ACEC designation would be retained and 80 acres added, making the total designation 600 acres. Motorized and mechanized vehicle access through the ACEC would be limited/controlled through a cooperative management agreement among the BLM, TNC, USFWS, ODFW, and others. No cross-country travel would be permitted. ROWs and other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. Actions would be pursued to acquire private inholdings from willing private land owners. The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class II.

The ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area within the fenced exclosure would be closed to livestock grazing. Livestock grazing and wild horse use would continue on 120 acres of the ACEC outside the fenced exclosure. Livestock use would be managed under the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection or removal of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. Management of the Borax Lake area would be the same as prescribed for the adjacent area.

East Kiger Plateau RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 1,216 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is almost entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

Since no roads are located in or around this RNA/ACEC, road maintenance is not an issue. The area is closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The RNA/ACEC is an exclusion area for new ROW or realty use authorizations in the Wilderness Area. In the WSA, new ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal.

All of the RNA/ACEC, except for 40 acres, is outside the No Livestock Grazing Area on Steens Mountain. The area is basically open to grazing but topographically excluded because of its location. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The RNA/ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act and the WSA IMP.

Alternative C

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 1,216 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is almost entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

Since no roads are located in or around this RNA/ACEC, road maintenance is not an issue. The area would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The entire RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal.

The RNA/ACEC would be closed to livestock grazing and the collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size of the RNA/ACEC would remain at 1,216 acres. Since the area is almost entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

No roads are located in or around this RNA/ACEC, so road maintenance is not an issue. The area would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. Within the Steens Mountain Wilderness portion of the RNA/ACEC, the area would be an exclusion area for new ROW and realty use authorizations. Within the WSA part of the RNA/ACEC, new ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal.

All but 40 acres of the RNA/ACEC would be open to livestock grazing; however, topography limits access to the site for most livestock. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Alternative E

The RNA/ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act and the WSA IMP.

Kiger Mustang ACEC

Alternative A

The existing ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 31,725 acres. That part of the ACEC located within the Stonehouse WSA is managed as VRM Class I. The portion of the ACEC outside of the WSA is managed as VRM Class IV.

The roads that run through the ACEC are maintained regularly due to important access considerations. Road maintenance is limited to the existing roadbed. OHV and mechanized vehicle use is limited to designated roads and ways. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided on non-WSA parcels unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be excluded from the portions of the ACEC located within the WSA unless access is needed to nonpublic property.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal.

The Kiger Mustang ACEC is located within portions of the Burnt Flat, Smyth/Kiger, and Riddle Mountain Grazing Allotments and is open to livestock grazing from April until October. The area is open to the collection of plant materials.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. That portion of the ACEC located within the WSA would continue to be managed under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area. The rest of the area would be managed as prescribed for similar adjacent areas.

Alternative C

The ACEC would be retained at 31,725 acres. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I in the WSA and VRM Class II outside the WSA. The roads through the ACEC would be maintained as needed for access considerations. Road maintenance would be limited to the existing roadbed. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. The ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations except for access needs to nonpublic property.

The area within the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The existing ACEC would be retained at 31,725 acres. Roads through the ACEC would be maintained as needed using only the existing roadbed. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. Visual resources in the ACEC would be managed as VRM Class I in the WSA, and VRM Class III outside the WSA.

The area within the ACEC would be withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The area would be open to collection of plant materials.

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. That portion of the ACEC located within the WSA would continue to be managed under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area. The rest of the area would be managed as prescribed for similar adjacent areas.

Little Blitzen RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 2,530 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, visual resources are managed as VRM Class I.

The Steens Loop Road runs through the RNA/ACEC and would be maintained regularly for access. That part of the RNA/ACEC away from the road is closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The RNA/ACEC is an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the Little Blitzen RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The RNA/ACEC is located within the No Livestock Grazing Area on Steens Mountain and is closed to grazing. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The RNA/ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Alternative C

The RNA/ACEC would decrease in size because 275 acres would be dropped on the east and south sides of the Steens Loop Road. The size of the RNA/ACEC would become 2,255 acres. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

The change in the boundary of the RNA/ACEC excludes the Steens Loop Road from the RNA, so road maintenance would not be an issue. The area would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The RNA/ACEC is an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the Little Blitzen RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The RNA/ACEC is located within the No Livestock Grazing Area on Steens Mountain and is closed to grazing. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The RNA/ACEC would be the same as Alternative C. Overnight camping would be allowed in historically used areas that are consistent with the purpose of the RNA and the Wilderness Plan objectives.

Alternative E

The RNA/ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Little Wildhorse Lake RNA/ACEC

Proposed RMP and Alternatives A and C

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 241 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

Since no roads are located in this RNA/ACEC, road maintenance is not an issue. The area would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the Little Wildhorse Lake RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The RNA/ACEC is located within the No Livestock Grazing Area on Steens Mountain and is closed to grazing. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The RNA/ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Alternative E

The RNA/ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Long Draw RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 441 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is entirely within the Hawk Mountain and Rincon WSAs, the visual resources are managed as VRM Class I.

The road that runs through the RNA/ACEC is maintained regularly due to important access considerations. Road maintenance is limited to the existing roadbed. OHV and mechanized vehicle use is limited to designated roads and ways. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated.

The Long Draw RNA/ACEC is open to locatable mineral entry but is subject to the WSA IMP, including the nonimpairment criteria. The area is closed to mineral leasing and salable mineral removal. The RNA/ACEC is located within the Pueblo-Lone Mountain Grazing Allotment and is open to grazing from December to April. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The RNA/ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed as a WSA under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area.

Alternative C

The RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 441 acres. The road through the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed in the existing roadbed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. The RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations except for access needs to nonpublic property. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

The area within the RNA/ACEC would be withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 441 acres. The road through the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed in the existing roadbed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. In the RNA/ACEC, new ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

The RNA/ACEC is a no lease area for leasable minerals and is closed to salable mineral removal. The area is open to locatable mineral entry subject to the WSA IMP, including the nonimpairment criteria. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Alternative E

The RNA/ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed as a WSA under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area.

Mickey Basin RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 560 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is entirely within the East Alvord WSA, the visual resources are managed as VRM Class I.

The road that runs through the RNA/ACEC is maintained regularly due to important access considerations. Road maintenance is limited to the existing roadbed. OHV and mechanized vehicle use is limited to designated roads and ways. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the Mickey Basin RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal.

A fenced exclosure protects most of the relevant and important values from grazing by wild horses and livestock, but grazing has not been officially excluded. The exclosure, however, does not encompass the entire RNA/ACEC. That portion of the RNA/ACEC outside the exclosure is within the Alvord Grazing Allotment and is open to grazing from December to April. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed as a WSA under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area.

Alternative C

The RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 560 acres. The road through the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed in the existing roadbed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. The RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations except for access needs to nonpublic property. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

The area within the RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would be closed within the fenced exclosure. Grazing would continue outside the exclosure fence under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The RNA/ACEC would be the same as Alternative C except that new ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated.

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed as a WSA under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area.

Pickett Rim ACEC

Alternative A

The existing ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 3,941 acres. The area would continue to be managed as VRM Class II. The roads within the ACEC are maintained as needed for access. OHV and mechanized vehicle use is limited to designated roads. The area would continue to be open to new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

The area within the Pickett Rim ACEC is open to leasable and locatable mineral entry and salable mineral removal. The ACEC is located within the LaVoy Tables Grazing Allotment and is open to grazing from April until November. The ACEC is open for collection or removal of plant materials.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. Management of the Pickett Rim area would be the same as prescribed for the adjacent area.

Alternative C

The existing ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size of the ACEC would be 3,941 acres and it would be managed as VRM Class II. The roads in the ACEC would be maintained as needed for access. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. The area would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations except for access needs to nonpublic property.

The area within the ACEC would be withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The ACEC designation would be revoked due to low occupancy by nesting raptors when compared with other nearby habitats. Relevant and important values are not present to qualify the area as an ACEC. Management of the Pickett Rim area would be the same as prescribed for the adjacent area.

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. Management of the Pickett Rim area would be the same as prescribed for the adjacent area.

Pueblo Foothills RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 2,503 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is entirely within the Pueblo Mountain WSA, the visual resources are managed as VRM Class I.

The road that runs through a small corner of the RNA/ACEC is maintained regularly due to important access considerations. Road maintenance is limited to the existing roadbed. OHV and mechanized vehicle use is limited to designated roads and ways. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated.

The Pueblo Foothills RNA/ACEC is open to locatable mineral entry, subject to the WSA IMP, but closed to mineral leasing and salable mineral removal. The RNA/ACEC is located within the Pueblo-Lone Mountain Grazing Allotment and is open to grazing from April until July. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed as a WSA under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area.

Alternative C

The existing RNA/ACEC designation would be retained except for 79 acres that would be deleted from the southeast corner. The area to be deleted is in early seral ecological status and does not contain the relevant and important values. The size of the RNA/ACEC would be changed to 2,424 acres. The road through the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed in the existing roadbed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. The RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations except for access needs to nonpublic property. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

The area within the RNA/ACEC would be withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The existing RNA/ACEC designation would be retained except for 79 acres that would be deleted from the southeast corner. The area to be deleted is in early seral ecological status and does not contain the relevant and important values. The size of the RNA/ACEC would be changed to 2,424 acres. The road through the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed in the existing roadbed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. In the RNA/ACEC, new ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

The RNA/ACEC is a no lease area for leasable minerals and is closed to salable mineral removal. The area is open to locatable mineral entry subject to the WSA IMP, including the nonimpairment criteria. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in

grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed as a WSA under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area.

Rooster Comb RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 716 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

The Steens Loop Road runs through the RNA/ACEC and is maintained regularly for access. That part of the ACEC away from the road is closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The RNA/ACEC is an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the Rooster Comb RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The RNA/ACEC is located within the No Livestock Grazing Area on Steens Mountain and is closed to grazing. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Alternative C

The existing RNA/ACEC designation would be retained. Thirty-three acres would be dropped on the south side of the Steens Loop Road. The size of the RNA/ACEC would be 683 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I. Since no roads are located in this RNA/ACEC, road maintenance is not an issue. The area would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the Rooster Comb RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The RNA/ACEC is located within the No Livestock Grazing Area on Steens Mountain and is closed to grazing. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The existing RNA/ACEC designation would be retained. Thirty-three acres would be dropped on the south side of the Steens Loop Road. The size of the RNA/ACEC would be 683 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I. Since no roads are located in this RNA/ACEC, road maintenance is not an issue. The area would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the Rooster Comb RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The RNA/ACEC is located within the No Livestock Grazing Area on Steens Mountain and is closed to grazing. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only. Overnight camping would be allowed in historically used areas that are consistent with the purpose of the RNA and the Wilderness Plan objectives.

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

South Fork Willow Creek RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 231 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, visual resources are managed as VRM Class I.

The East Rim Viewpoint parking area is located within a small portion of the RNA/ACEC and is maintained regularly. The area is closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use outside the existing parking area. The RNA/ACEC is an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the South Fork Willow Creek RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The RNA/ACEC is located within the No Livestock Grazing Area on Steens Mountain and is closed to grazing. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Proposed RMP and Alternative C

The existing RNA/ACEC designation would be retained; however, 45 acres would be dropped where the East Rim Viewpoint is located. The size of the RNA/ACEC would be 186 acres. Since the RNA/ACEC is entirely within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

Since no roads are located in this RNA/ACEC, road maintenance is not an issue. The area would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the South Fork Willow Creek RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The RNA/ACEC is located within the No Livestock Grazing Area on Steens Mountain and is closed to grazing. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Steens Mountain ACEC

Alternative A

The existing ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 57,501 acres. The ACEC is contained within a large part of the Steens Mountain Wilderness as well as some areas of WSA and non-WSA. Visual resources are managed as VRM Class I in the Wilderness Area and WSAs and as VRM Class II in the rest of the ACEC.

The roads through the ACEC have been closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use in the Steens Mountain Wilderness. Outside the wilderness, OHV and mechanized vehicle use is limited to designated roads and ways. Road maintenance

is not an issue in the Steens Mountain Wilderness, but is limited to the existing roadbed in the other areas. New ROWs and other realty use authorizations are excluded in the Steens Mountain Wilderness except for access needs to nonpublic property. In the WSAs, realty actions are avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. Realty actions are allowed in the remainder of the ACEC.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the Steens Mountain ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Some of the ACEC is located within portions of the Alvord, Mann Lake, East Ridge, Chimney and Serrano Point Grazing Allotments and is open to grazing in those areas from April until November. Most of the ACEC is located within a large area legislated as a No Livestock Grazing Area. Livestock grazing is prohibited in that area. The collection or removal of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed as wilderness, WSA, or as prescribed for the particular areas.

Alternative C

The existing ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 57,501 acres. The ACEC is contained within a large part of the Steens Mountain Wilderness as well as some areas of WSA and non-WSA. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I in the entire ACEC.

The roads through the ACEC have been closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use in the Steens Mountain Wilderness. Outside the wilderness, OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated roads and ways. Road maintenance is not an issue in the Steens Mountain Wilderness, but would be limited to the existing roadbed in the other areas. New ROWs and other realty use authorizations would be excluded from the entire ACEC except for access needs to nonpublic property.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the Steens Mountain ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue in the areas open to grazing under management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing would be evaluated for potential effects on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or promoted. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. Most of the ACEC is located within a large area legislated as the No Livestock Grazing Area. Livestock grazing is prohibited in that area. The collection or removal of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The ACEC designation would be revoked due to overlapping wilderness or IMP management which eliminates any need for an ACEC designation. The area would continue to be managed as wilderness, WSA, or as prescribed for the particular areas.

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed as wilderness, WSA, or as prescribed for the particular areas.

Tum Tum Lake RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

The existing RNA/ACEC designation and boundaries would be retained. The size would remain at 2,064 acres. The RNA/ACEC is not located within any WSA; therefore, visual resources are managed as VRM Class III as determined in the original inventory.

The roads through the RNA/ACEC are not important for access to other areas. If maintenance is needed, any disturbance is limited to the existing roadbed. OHV and mechanized vehicle use is limited to designated roads. The area is open to new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

The Tum Tum Lake RNA/ACEC is open to locatable and leasable mineral entry and open to salable mineral removal. The area is located within the Pueblo-Lone Mountain Grazing Allotment and is open to grazing from April through July. Since the RNA/ACEC was originally designated for protection of unique plant communities, collection of plant materials is allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would be managed as prescribed for the adjacent area.

Alternative C

The RNA/ACEC designation would be retained and 375 acres dropped due to unmanageability and surface disturbance. The size of the RNA/ACEC would be 1,689 acres. The roads in the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. The RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations except for access needs to nonpublic property. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class II.

The area within the RNA/ACEC would be withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area would be closed to livestock grazing. Collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The RNA/ACEC designation would be retained and 375 acres dropped due to unmanageability and surface disturbance. The size of the RNA/ACEC would be 1,689 acres. The roads through the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed in the existing roadbed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class II.

The area within the RNA/ACEC would be open to leasable and locatable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area would be closed to livestock grazing. Collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Alternative E

The ACEC designation would be revoked. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would be managed as prescribed for the adjacent area.

Objective 2. Designate and manage new ACECs that meet relevance and importance criteria and need special management or protection.

Proposed Big Alvord Creek RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

Since no RNA/ACEC would be designated, existing prescriptions would apply. The site is in the Steens Mountain Wilderness, so the visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I. There are no roads in this RNA/ACEC, and the entire area is closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The area is an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

The area is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area is located within the legislated Steens Mountain No Livestock Grazing Area and therefore closed to grazing. Since the area is within the Steens Mountain ACEC, collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Alternative B

No RNA/ACEC would be designated. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed as wilderness under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Proposed RMP and Alternative C

The proposed RNA/ACEC would be designated as the Big Alvord Creek RNA/ACEC covering 1,676 acres. The area would be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The area would be an exclusion area for ROWs or other realty use authorizations. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

The area within the RNA/ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area is closed to livestock grazing and the collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Alternative E

No RNA/ACEC would be designated. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed as wilderness under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Proposed Catlow Redband Trout ACEC

Alternative A

Since no ACEC would be designated, existing prescriptions would apply. The site is currently managed as VRM Classes I and III. The roads in the area are maintained as needed for access. The area is closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use in the Steens Mountain Wilderness and limited to existing roads in other areas. The area is an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations within the Steens Mountain Wilderness unless access is needed to nonpublic property. Outside the Steens Mountain Wilderness, the area is open to new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

The area is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area is located within the South Steens and Roaring Springs Federal Fenced Range (FFR) Grazing Allotments and is grazed from April through November. The area is open to collection of plant materials.

Alternative B

No ACEC would be designated. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. Most of the area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act. A small part of the area is outside the wilderness and would be managed the same as other sites within the CMPA that have no specific designation.

Alternative C

The proposed ACEC would be designated as the Catlow Redband Trout ACEC covering 6,800 acres. Roads that are present in the ACEC would be maintained as needed for access. OHV and mechanized vehicle use in the ACEC would be limited to designated routes. ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be excluded unless access is needed to nonpublic property. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I in the Steens Mountain Wilderness and VRM Class II in the rest of the ACEC.

The area within the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

No ACEC would be designated. Most of the area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act. A small part of the area is outside the wilderness and would be managed the same as other sites within the CMPA that have no specific designation.

Alternative E

No ACEC would be designated. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. Most of the area would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act. A small part of the area is outside the wilderness and would be managed the same as other sites within the CMPA that have no specific designation.

Proposed East Fork Trout Creek RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

Since no RNA/ACEC would be designated, existing prescriptions would apply. The site is in the Mahogany Ridge WSA, so the visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I. The dead end road that runs into the area is maintained due to important access considerations. Road maintenance is limited to the existing roadbed. OHV and mechanized vehicle use is limited to designated roads and ways. The area is open to new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

The area is open to locatable and leasable mineral entry and salable mineral removal. The area is located within the Trout Creek Mountain Grazing Allotment and is open to grazing for five days in September. The area is open to collection of plant materials.

Alternative B

No RNA/ACEC would be designated. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would be managed as a WSA under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area.

Alternative C

The proposed RNA/ACEC would be designated as the East Fork Trout Creek RNA/ACEC covering 361 acres. The road through the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed in the existing roadbed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. The RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations except for access needs to nonpublic property. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

The area within the RNA/ACEC would be withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area would be closed to livestock grazing. Collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The proposed RNA/ACEC would be designated as the East Fork Trout Creek RNA/ACEC covering 361 acres. The road through the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed in the existing roadbed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I.

The RNA/ACEC is a no lease area for leasable minerals and is closed to salable mineral removal. The area is open to locatable mineral entry subject to the WSA IMP, including the nonimpairment criteria. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Alternative E

No RNA/ACEC would be designated. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would be managed as a WSA under the WSA IMP until Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation for the area.

Proposed Fir Groves ACEC

Alternative A

Since no ACEC would be designated, existing prescriptions would apply. The site is managed as VRM Class II. The roads in the area are maintained in the existing roadbeds needed for access. The area is limited seasonally to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. Off-road vehicle travel is prohibited. The area is open for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations within the provisions of the Steens Act.

The area is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area is located within the Hardie Summer and Hammond FFR Allotments and is grazed periodically during the spring and summer. The area is open to collection of plant materials.

Alternative B

No ACEC would be designated. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would continue to be managed the same as prescribed for adjacent areas.

Alternative C

The proposed ACEC would be designated as the Fir Groves ACEC covering 477 acres. OHV and mechanized vehicle use in the ACEC would be limited to designated routes. ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be excluded unless access is needed to nonpublic property. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class II.

The area within the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area would be closed to livestock grazing. Collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

The dense stand of trees along Little Fir Creek would be mechanically thinned to protect the site from catastrophic fire incidents and to allow for development of understory vegetation.

Proposed RMP

The proposed ACEC would be designated as the Fir Groves ACEC covering 477 acres. OHV and mechanized vehicle use in the ACEC would be limited to designated routes. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class II.

The area within the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

The dense stand of trees along Little Fir Creek would be mechanically thinned to protect the site from catastrophic fire incidents and to allow for development of understory vegetation.

Alternative E

No ACEC would be designated. Under this alternative, eliminating the designation would provide for the opportunity to maximize commodity production. The area would continue to be managed the same as prescribed for adjacent areas.

Proposed Mickey Hot Springs RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

Since no ACEC would be designated, existing prescriptions would apply. A portion of the site is in the East Alvord WSA, so visual resources are managed as VRM Class I in that area. The non-WSA portion of the proposal is managed as VRM Class II. OHV and mechanized vehicle use is limited to designated roads. The area is open to new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area is located within the Alvord Grazing Allotment but is fenced to keep livestock out of the hot springs. The area is open to collection of plant materials.

Alternatives B and C

The proposed Mickey Hot Springs ACEC would be designated. The size of the ACEC would be 42 acres, or all of the land within the fenced exclosure. The road and parking area within the ACEC would be closed. The area would also be closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. The ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I in the WSA and VRM Class II outside the WSA.

Due to the implementation of the Steens Act, the ACEC is withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The fenced ACEC would be closed to livestock grazing and open to collection of plant materials.

Proposed RMP and Alternative E

The ACEC would be the same as Alternatives B and C except that new ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated.

Proposed Serrano Point RNA/ACEC

Alternative A

Since no RNA/ACEC would be designated, the existing prescriptions would apply. The site would continue to be managed as VRM Class II. The road that runs through the area is maintained due to important access considerations. Road maintenance is limited to the existing roadbed. The area is open to OHV and mechanized vehicle use and new ROWs or other realty use authorizations.

The area is open to locatable and leasable mineral entry and salable mineral removal. The area is located within the Tule Springs Grazing Allotment and is open to grazing from December until March. The area is open to collection of plant materials.

Alternative B

No RNA/ACEC would be designated. Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be managed to maximize natural processes; therefore, the additional designation would not be necessary. The area would be managed the same as prescribed for adjacent areas.

Alternative C

The proposed RNA/ACEC would be designated as the Serrano Point RNA/ACEC covering 679 acres. The road through the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed in the existing roadbed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. The RNA/ACEC would be an exclusion area for new ROWs or other realty use authorizations except for access needs to nonpublic property. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class II.

The area within the RNA/ACEC would be withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. The area would be closed to livestock grazing. Collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

Proposed RMP

The proposed RNA/ACEC would be designated as the Serrano Point RNA/ACEC covering 679 acres. The road through the RNA/ACEC would be maintained as needed in the existing roadbed for access considerations. OHV and mechanized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. New ROWs or other realty use authorizations would be avoided unless the activity is compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated. Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class II.

The area within the RNA/ACEC would be withdrawn from locatable and leasable mineral entry and closed to salable mineral removal. Livestock grazing would continue under the management of the existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing use or new range improvement projects would be evaluated for potential effects, and permitted if relevant and important values would be maintained or promoted. Where adverse effects are identified, livestock use or range improvement projects would be adjusted. The collection of plant materials would be allowed by permit only.

2.21.2 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.22 Wilderness

2.22.1 Management Framework

The Steens Act established the Steens Mountain Wilderness consisting of 170,084 acres of public land (Map 2.20.1). A No Livestock Grazing Area consisting of 97,229 acres of public land, 94,959 acres of which are located within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, created the first Congressionally designated cattle-free wilderness. The Steens Mountain Wilderness is managed according to the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964, as amended; the FLPMA; BLM Manuals 8560/H-8560-1 (Management of Designated Wilderness Areas), and 8561 (Wilderness Management Plans); the BLM's Wilderness Management Regulations at 43 CFR 6300; and the specific directives contained within the Steens Act. The specific provisions are specified in Section 202 of the Act and include the following:

> (a) GENERAL RULE. - The Secretary shall administer the Steens Mountain Wilderness in accordance with this title and the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.). Any reference in the Wilderness Act to the effective date of that Act (or any similar reference) shall be deemed to be a reference to the date of the enactment of this Act.
>
> (b) WILDERNESS BOUNDARIES ALONG ROADS. - Where a wilderness boundary exists along a road, the wilderness boundary shall be set back from the centerline of the road, consistent with the BLM's guidelines as established in its Wilderness Management Policy.
>
> (c) ACCESS TO NON-FEDERAL LANDS. – The Secretary shall provide reasonable access to private lands within the boundaries of the Wilderness Area, as provided in section 112(d).
>
> (d) GRAZING. -
>
> > (1) Administration. - Except as provided in section 113(c)(2), grazing of livestock shall be administered in accordance with the provision of section 4(d)(4) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(4)), in accordance with the provisions of this Act, and in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Appendices A and B of House Report 101-405 of the 101st Congress.

Section 112(e)(1) of the Steens Act states, "The Secretary shall provide reasonable access to non-federally owned lands or interests in land within the boundaries of the Cooperative Management and Protection Area and the Wilderness Area to provide the owner of the land or interest the reasonable use thereof."

Wilderness boundary setbacks along existing roads are as follows:

Distance from Centerline	Type of Road
300 feet	- High standard roads such as paved highways
100 feet	- High standard logging roads
30 feet	- Jeep roads, low standard logging roads, dirt roads used for ROW maintenance, etc.

(BLM Manual Handbook H-8560-1). Specific boundary setbacks are described in Section 3.22.1.

Except for the designated No Livestock Grazing Area (97,229 acres of public land, 94,959 acres of which are in the Steens Mountain Wilderness), grazing of livestock will continue and will be administered in accordance with the provision of section 4(d)(4) of the Wilderness Act, in accordance with the provisions of the Steens Act, and in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Appendix A of House Report 101-405 of the 101st Congress.

The Wilderness Act (Section 4(d)(6)) states, "Commercial services may be performed within the wilderness areas designated by this Act to the extent necessary for activities that are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas."

Section 115(b) of the Steens Act states, "The Secretary may renew a special recreation use permit applicable to lands included in the Wilderness Area to the extent that the Secretary determines that the permit is consistent with the Wilderness Act (16 USC 1131 et seq.). If renewal is not consistent with the Wilderness Act, the Secretary shall seek other opportunities for the permit holder through modification of the permit to realize historic permit use to the extent that the use is consistent with the Wilderness Act and this Act, as determined by the Secretary."

Any proposed administrative actions, projects, or activities occurring in the Steens Mountain Wilderness, except for emergencies, would be decided following the use of the MRDG and project level NEPA analysis on a site specific basis in compliance with management plan objectives and direction. In this case, emergencies are defined as actions involving the health and safety of persons, law enforcement efforts involving serious crime or fugitive pursuit, retrieval of a deceased individual, or certain wildland fire suppression activities.

Except as specifically stated in the Wilderness Act, the following activities are currently prohibited in wilderness at 43 CFR 6302.20:

- Operate a commercial enterprise.
- Build temporary or permanent roads.
- Build aircraft landing strips, heliports, or helispots.
- Use motorized equipment or motor vehicles, motorboats, or other forms of mechanical transport.
- Land aircraft, or drop or pick up any material, supplies or person by means of aircraft, including a helicopter, hangglider, hot air balloon, parasail, or parachute.
- Build, install, or erect structures or installations, including transmission lines, motels, vacation homes, sheds, stores, resorts, organization camps, hunting and fishing lodges, electronic installations, and similar structures, other than tents, tarpaulins, temporary corrals, and similar devices for overnight camping.
- Cut trees.
- Enter or use wilderness areas without authorization, where the BLM requires authorization.
- Engage or participate in competitive use, including those activities involving physical endurance of a person or animal, foot races, watercraft races, survival exercises, war games, or other similar exercises.
- Violate any BLM regulation, authorization, or order.

2.22.2 Wilderness Management

Wilderness can mean many different things to a variety of people. There are two main concepts: one is the sociological idea that wilderness is a place where one can experience a recreational or social activity in a natural environment free from development. For a person from an urban environment with little experience in the natural environment, wilderness could be virtually any forested area that is relatively undeveloped. Second, legal wilderness is defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964; "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain".

As part of management of the Steens Mountain Wilderness, the BLM would implement the provisions of the Leave No Trace principles. There are seven principles: Plan Ahead and Prepare; Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces; Dispose of Waste Properly; Leave What You Find; Minimize Campfire Impacts; Respect Wildlife; and Be Considerate to Other Visitors. The management of the wilderness would also integrate the appropriate provisions of the BLM's FMP.

The management of the Steens Mountain Wilderness would consider the level of use or use capacity of the area under management. This would be done through the use of indicators to assess the health or condition of the wilderness, rather than the establishment of a specific level of use. As outlined below, certain indicators would be monitored on a regular basis and the monitoring results would be used to adjust the type or level of management.

Two Management Areas defined for the Steens Mountain Wilderness are the Gorges Management Area and the Uplands Management Area. The boundaries of these two Management Areas are generally defined by the patterns and types of historic use and the physiography of the wilderness area. Within the Gorges Management Area are five separate canyons: Little Blitzen, Big Indian, Little Indian, Wildhorse, and Kiger. Management actions can be initiated in each of the canyons separately to accommodate the individual management situation of each canyon.

2.22.2.1 Gorges Management Area

This portion of the Steens Mountain Wilderness is adjacent to primary access and popular destination points. Both overnight and day use occur. Encounters with other users are moderate to frequent, due to the popularity of the gorges. Areas are monitored to protect natural conditions while providing for use and enjoyment of the recreational and natural features.

2.22.2.1.1 Desired Conditions - Natural Environment

Natural succession occurs in all existing vegetative communities and is influenced by natural processes and disturbances. The structure, composition and function, and spatial distribution of vegetation types are influenced and sustained by natural processes. Human influence on vegetation is minimal, except where prescribed fire or other treatments are needed to protect or restore wilderness resources. Plant species are predominately native and indigenous to the immediate area. There are no increases in nonindigenous species composition from the present baseline. Fire is reestablished as a natural ecological force. Fire management activities are designed to retain the natural characteristics of the ecosystem. Evidence of the effects of fire, insects, or disease may be present. Appropriate air quality standards are met; however, periodic smoke could occur from fire. Visibility is generally unimpaired.

Human influence on the composition, structure and function of aquatic ecosystems is minimal in most areas, except where restoration is determined necessary to restore or facilitate natural processes. Fish and wildlife habitat management activities emphasize the protection of natural processes. A range of habitats is sustained for all naturally occurring species. Special status species abundance and distribution is maintained or increased. Human influence on physical features such as soils and geologic materials are minimal.

2.22.2.1.2 Desired Conditions - Human Environment

This portion of the Steens Mountain Wilderness is adjacent to primary access and popular destination points. The opportunity exists for a moderate level of risk and challenge. Contact with other users, recreational stock, or agency personnel is frequent. Encounters with large and small groups are more likely. Day use opportunities are more common within this Management Area. Campsites are dispersed and may be visible or audible from adjacent campsites. Signing to indicate trail routes is not currently planned, but may occur in the future at trail intersections and other areas as needed. Boundary signs, trailhead signs, trail junction signs, and other information are provided to educate and inform wilderness users. Signs are on unstained wood with incised letters and mounted on unstained posts.

Except for commercial or organized group permits, permits for day use activities are not currently planned. Effects from camping meet Natural Environment desired condition (see above). Permitted outfitters provide services to visitors for activities that meet identified public needs and that cannot be provided in nonwilderness settings. Permits for historic uses consistent with the Wilderness Act as recognized by the Steens Act may continue. Recreational stock grazing adheres to appropriate standards and guidelines. Structures and facilities may be allowed for resource protection and administration of the area, however they are allowed only when they are the minimum necessary to protect the wilderness resource and for the health and safety of persons within the area. No facilities or improvements within the Steens

Mountain Wilderness are provided for the comfort and convenience of the visitor. Evidence of historic and cultural sites may exist, but is not interpreted or signed within the Steens Mountain Wilderness.

2.22.2.2 Uplands Management Area

This area of the wilderness features natural environmental conditions and offers a moderate to high degree of solitude. Natural processes and conditions have not been and would not be affected by human activity (use). Areas are monitored to protect ecological conditions with effects of human activities minimized.

2.22.2.2.1 Desired Conditions - Natural Environment

Natural succession occurs in all existing vegetative communities and is influenced by natural processes and disturbances. The structure, composition and function, and spatial distribution of vegetative types are the result of natural successional processes. Human influence on vegetation is minimal, except where prescribed fire or other treatments are needed to restore or protect wilderness resources. Plant species are predominately native and indigenous to the immediate area. There are no increases in nonindigenous species composition from an established baseline. Fire is reestablished as a natural ecological force. Fire management activities are designed to restore or retain the natural characteristics of the ecosystem. Evidence of the effects of fire, insects, or disease may be present. Appropriate air quality standards are met; however, periodic smoke could occur from fire. Visibility is generally unimpaired.

Human influence on the composition, structure, and function of aquatic ecosystems is unnoticeable in most areas, except where restoration is determined necessary to facilitate natural processes. Fish and wildlife habitat management activities emphasize the protection of natural processes. A range of habitats is sustained for all naturally occurring species. Special status species abundance and distribution is maintained or increased. Human influence on physical features such as soils and geologic materials is unnoticeable in most areas.

2.22.2.2.2 Desired Conditions - Human Environment

The opportunity exists for a moderate to high level of risk and challenge. Contact with individuals or groups occurs more frequently on trails than while traveling cross-country. Encounters with large groups occur less often than with small groups or individuals. Domestic livestock and recreational stock may also be encountered. Campsites are dispersed; visitors at adjacent campsites are usually not be seen or heard. Existing campsites are evident, as are maintained and user-established trails.

Effects from camping are minimally noticeable. Permitted outfitters provide services to visitors for activities that meet identified public needs and that cannot be provided in nonwilderness settings. Permits for historic uses consistent with the Wilderness Act as recognized in the Steens Act may continue. Signing to indicate trail routes is not currently planned, but may occur at trail intersections and elsewhere as needed. Management information and administrative signing occurs at trailheads as appropriate for resource protection. Signs blend in with the natural setting. Livestock and recreational stock grazing adheres to appropriate standards and guidelines. Evidence of historic and cultural sites may exist, but is not interpreted or signed within the Steens Mountain Wilderness.

2.22.2.3 Baseline Condition Assessment and Wilderness Condition Monitoring

Specific monitoring would be conducted on an annual basis commencing in 2003 and continuing for two years (through 2004) to assess the baseline condition within the wilderness area. After the baseline condition is determined, the annual monitoring would be used to assess the condition of the wilderness to determine the need for implementation of management options. The following are the seven categories of monitoring and data to be collected that would be used to assess the baseline condition and the ongoing wilderness condition.

- Campsite Condition - campsite changes.
- Campsite Density - number of campsites in a given area.
- Perception of Solitude - trail register information, including length-of-stay, location of use, party size and makeup, and Wilderness Ranger interviews including location of use encounters.
- Trail Condition - changes in trails, including width, depth, and number of social trails.
- Length-of-Stay - trail register and Wilderness Ranger interviews on the length-of-stay.
- Recreational Stock Use - root exposure, manure in campsites, and tree girdling.

- Unauthorized Motor Vehicle and Mechanical Transport Intrusions - motor vehicle and mechanical transport intrusions into the wilderness on closed roads or off of roads other than for permitted use or emergencies.

2.22.2.4 Management Options

This section describes the management options that are planned for use in helping to maintain or achieve the desired conditions in each Management Area. Management options are techniques, regulations, or responses that can be implemented to affect wilderness conditions on the ground. Management options are categorized into three levels as follows: Level I management options are generally information and educational measures that can be implemented initially. Level II management options are generally indirect methods intended to return a given condition to compliance with a standard or guideline. Level III management options are more direct or restrictive and are not undertaken until guidelines are exceeded to a certain extent that is sustained a number of times or for a certain period of time (described as thresholds). Seven specific standards have been developed for use in evaluating the Management Areas and include the following:

- Campsite Condition.
- Campsite Density.
- Perception of Solitude.
- Trail Condition.
- Length-of-Stay.
- Recreational Stock Use.
- Unauthorized Motor Vehicle and Mechanical Transport Intrusions.

The above monitoring data are applied to the guidelines to determine whether each Management Area or individual canyon within the Gorges Management Area meets the guideline. Each standard and its management options are described below and would be implemented, based on the degree to which a Management Area or individual canyon in the Gorges Management Area exceeds a threshold for one or more guidelines.

Campsite Condition Standard - Campsite conditions reflect the visual imprint of human uses, as well as effects to soil and vegetation, and often hydrologic and water quality. A modified Cole Campsite Monitoring System is used to classify camp area conditions. The Cole Campsite Monitoring System was developed through the USFS to provide a method for the systematic monitoring of campsites to assess their use and conditions. Conditions are grouped into four categories based on a score that is determined by surveying a variety of factors that affect campsites. Conditions range from "minimum", showing the least effects, to "extreme", showing the highest effects.

Campsite Condition - Management Options			
Indicator	Level I Options	Level II Options	Level III Options
Number of campsites within a Management Area or individual canyon that are within a Campsite Condition	- Voluntary dispersal of use through education efforts by agency personnel, volunteers, and publications. - Inform visitors of opportunities outside wilderness. - Emphasize Leave No Trace education efforts. - Increase wilderness information specialist (WIS) program and ghost rider program efforts.	- Discourage the inclusion of information in publications or guidebooks that directs visitors to high use areas. - Inform users about alternative areas. - Implement area-wide non-quota permit system to increase visitor education. - Limit improvements of trailhead access to areas where crowding is a concern. - Limit improvement of trail access in areas where crowding is a concern. - Restrict campfire use to previously used areas. - Limit camping to designated campsites in high use zones to minimize establishment of new campsites. - Close and rehabilitate selected campsites where campsite density is high. - Limit group sizes to reduce effects to campsites. - Implement regulations to restrict recreational stock from being tied to trees in campsites.	- Shorten length-of-stay period. - Implement permit quota system for specific areas that are exceeding guidelines. - Implement area-wide permit quota system at trailheads or at individual destinations. - Implement closure of specific areas to the use of campfires and remove fire rings.

Campsite Density Standard - The campsite density standard describes the maximum allowable number of established campsites per section (one square mile) within the Uplands Management Area, or per linear mile within the Gorges Management Area or individual canyon. Established campsites are determined from evidence that continued or repetitive camping has occurred at the campsite in the past. Evidence could consist of fire ring(s), barren ground caused by compaction, long-term vegetation effects, or other severe signs of human usage. Campsite density is also monitored at designated high-altitude lake basins. The guideline for the maximum allowable established campsites would be determined for each lake basin.

Campsite Density - Management Options			
Indicator	Level I Options	Level II Options	Level III Options
Number of existing campsites within a Management Area or individual canyon, or Number of established campsites within a lake basin area.	- Voluntary dispersal of use through education efforts by agency personnel, volunteers, and publications. - Inform visitors of opportunities outside wilderness. - Emphasize Leave No Trace education efforts. - Agency personnel educate users to utilize existing campsites in high use areas.	- Discourage the inclusion of information in publications or guidebooks that directs visitors to high use areas. - Inform users about alternative areas. - Implement area-wide non-quota permit system to increase visitor education. - Limit improvements of trailhead access to areas where crowding is a concern. - Limit improvement of trail access in areas where crowding is a concern. - In site specific areas, increase the distance from campsite to water resources. - Restrict campfire use to previously used areas. - Limit camping to designated campsites in high use zones to minimize establishment of new campsites. - Close and rehabilitate selected campsites where campsite density is high.	- Shorten length-of-stay period. - Implement permit quota system for specific areas that are exceeding guidelines. - Implement area-wide permit quota system at trailheads or at individual destinations.

Perception of Solitude Standard - Perception of Solitude is measured by campsite and trail encounters, the sizes of groups encountered, and by the degree of "perceived crowding," as determined from surveying wilderness users. The Campsite Encounter Guideline monitors the average number of occupied campsites within sight or sound of the monitor's campsite per Management Area or individual canyon. The monitored number of encounters is averaged over the summer use season that varies by Management Area or individual canyon.

The Trail Encounter Guideline monitors the average number of encounters with parties (groups) on a trail or cross-country route. Encounter rates depend on the length of time spent hiking or riding and are converted to an eight-hour period to obtain monitoring consistency. The location of a trail or route segment relative to the different Management Areas determines the location of encounters. Trail or route encounters with large groups (defined as groups having more than twelve people) are monitored by the same methodology. Crowding perception is monitored through surveys of wilderness users to obtain their viewpoints regarding crowding levels during their visit. The crowding scale ranges from Not Crowded to Extremely Crowded. The guideline refers to the percentage of respondents who reported being moderately to extremely crowded.

Perception of Solitude - Management Options			
Indicator	Level I Options	Level II Options	Level III Options
Number of campsites occupied within sight or sound of the monitor's campsite per Management Area or individual canyon (season average). or Number of party encounters on or off trail per eight-hour day (season average). or Percent of sampled visitors who report being moderately to extremely crowded within a Management Area or individual canyon.	- Voluntary dispersal of use through education efforts by agency personnel, volunteers, and publications. - Inform visitors of opportunities outside wilderness. - Inform visitors of the type of experience (i.e. high encounter rate, numerous campsites, etc.) they are likely to have. - Inform visitors of areas or times best to visit that would reduce crowding.	- Discourage the inclusion of information in publications or guidebooks that directs visitors to areas. - Inform users about alternative areas. - Implement area-wide non-quota permit system to increase visitor education. - Limit group size in areas of concentrated use. - Limit improvements of trailhead access to areas where crowding is a concern. - Limit improvement of trail access in areas where crowding is a concern. - In specific areas, increase the distance that campsites must be away from water.	- Institute parking fees at high use trailheads. - Shorten length-of-stay period. - Implement backcountry use fees for high use areas. - Implement permit quota system for specific areas that are exceeding guidelines. - Implement area-wide permit quota system at trailheads or at individual destinations.

Trail Condition Standard - The trail condition standard describes the maximum allowable number of social trails per Management Area or individual canyon, as well as changes in the width and depth of the system trails. System and social trails refer to evidence that continued or repetitive use has occurred along a trail in the past. Evidence could consist of trampled vegetation, barren ground caused by compaction, long-term vegetation effects, or other severe signs of human use. System trails are those that are managed for continual long-term use. Social trails are the result of random use patterns and are unplanned in their location.

Trail Condition - Management Options			
Indicator	Level I Options	Level II Options	Level III Options
Number of social trails within a Management Area or individual canyon. or Width and depth of system trails.	- Voluntary dispersal of use through education efforts by agency personnel, volunteers, and publications. - Inform visitors of opportunities outside wilderness. - Emphasize Leave No Trace education efforts. - Agency personnel educate users to utilize existing campsites in high use areas.	- Discourage the inclusion of information in publications or guidebooks that directs visitors to high use areas. - Inform users about alternative areas. - Implement area-wide non-quota permit system to increase visitor education. - Limit improvements of trailhead access to areas where crowding is a concern. - Limit improvement of trail access in areas where crowding is a concern. - In site specific areas, increase the distance campsites must be away from water. - Limit camping to designated campsites in high use zones to minimize establishment of new campsites. - Close and rehabilitate selected trails where trail density is high.	- Shorten length-of-stay period. - Implement permit quota system for specific areas that are exceeding guidelines. - Implement area-wide permit quota system at trailheads or at individual destinations.

Length-of-Stay Standard - The length-of-stay standard describes the maximum allowable number of days individuals or groups stay within a Management Area or individual canyon. The length-of-stay would be based on information collected by voluntary reporting at trailheads and interviews by the Wilderness Rangers.

Length-of-Stay - Management Options			
Indicator	Level I Options	Level II Options	Level III Options
Length-of-stay within a Management Area or individual canyon.	- Voluntary reduction in the lengths-of-stay through education efforts by agency personnel, volunteers, and publications. - Inform visitors of opportunities outside wilderness. - Emphasize Leave No Trace education efforts. - Increase WIS program and ghost rider program efforts.	- Discourage the inclusion of information in publications or guidebooks that directs visitors to high use areas. - Inform users about alternative areas. - Implement area-wide non-quota permit system to increase visitor education. - Limit improvements of trailhead access to areas where length-of-stay is a concern. - Limit improvement of trail access in areas where length-of-stay is a concern. - Limit camping to designated campsites in high use zones, to minimize establishment of new campsites.	- Shorten length-of-stay period. - Implement permit quota system for specific areas that are exceeding guidelines. - Implement area-wide permit quota system at trailheads or at individual destinations. - Implement closure of specific areas to the use of campfires and remove fire rings.

Recreational Stock Use Standard - The effects of recreational stock use on vegetation, meadows, and riparian areas is determined by monitoring the amount of manure in campsite areas, condition of tree roots, and presence of tree girdling in campsite areas.

Recreational Stock Use - Management Options			
Indicator	Level I Options	Level II Options	Level III Options
Amount of recreational stock use within a Management Area or individual canyon.	- Educate public on proper use of recreational stock in the backcountry. - Voluntary dispersal of use through educational efforts. - Inform visitors of opportunities outside these areas. - Emphasize Leave No Trace education efforts for all backcountry users, with emphasis for stock users.	- Limit the number of recreational stock-per-party in areas that are exceeding guidelines. - Require certified weed free feed/hay be used for recreational livestock in place of grazing. - Prohibit picketing in areas where guidelines are exceeded. - Implement and enforce special rules to prohibit tying recreational stock to trees. - Restrict grazing within areas that are exceeding guidelines to no more than one-third of the grazing season. - Establish an "on" date for recreational stock use or a season of use. - Develop a rotational system within a Management Area or individual canyon that would allow recreational stock grazing only within specified areas. - Limit length-of-stay by recreational stock within areas that are exceeding guidelines.	- Close specific areas that are exceeding guidelines to use by recreational stock. - Close Management Area or individual canyon to grazing by recreational stock.

Unauthorized Motor Vehicle and Mechanical Transport Intrusions Standard - The unauthorized motor vehicle and mechanical transport intrusions standard describes the maximum allowable number of unauthorized intrusions into the Steens Mountain Wilderness off road or on any closed road or from the off-set boundary of any road bounded on both sides by wilderness or from the off-set boundary of any road which runs parallel to the wilderness. Unauthorized intrusions can include any type of motor vehicle or mechanical transport including, but not limited to, OHVs, snowmobiles, and bicycles. Unauthorized intrusions are determined from evidence of vehicle tracks in the wilderness or from actual sightings of vehicles in the wilderness.

Unauthorized Motor Vehicle and Mechanical Transport Intrusions - Management Options		
Indicator	Level I Options	Level II Options
Number of intrusions into the wilderness by unauthorized motor vehicles and mechanical transport on closed roads or off of roads.	- Disperse educational information regarding motor vehicle and mechanical transport regulations in wilderness with efforts by agency personnel, volunteers, and publications. - Increase signing of wilderness boundary and area closures. - Inform visitors of driving opportunities outside wilderness. - Emphasize Leave No Trace education efforts. - Agency personnel educate users and other agency personnel about regulations regarding motor vehicles and mechanical transport in wilderness. - Post wilderness regulations regarding motor vehicle and mechanized transport use restrictions in wilderness at campgrounds, appropriate trailheads, and other areas appropriate for public information. - Cite any known violators driving in the wilderness.	- Restriction of public use for certain recreational activities. - Develop controls at access points to exclude motor vehicles and mechanical transport from the wilderness. - Increase law enforcement and other routine patrols.

2.22.3 Management Direction by Alternative

The management direction for the Steens Mountain Wilderness, by alternative, assesses a range of thresholds that would trigger the implementation of the appropriate level of management based on the exceedence of the threshold. Thresholds are the upper limits in terms of time period or percentage of the standard or guideline that is exceeded, at which point the next level of management options would be undertaken.

2.22.3.1 **Goal 1 - Maintain or improve the wilderness values and the special features of the Steens Mountain Wilderness under a principle of nondegradation and in a manner that would leave these values unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, while providing opportunities for public use, enjoyment, and understanding.**

Objective. Manage public visitation in the wilderness to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, naturalness, and other features including ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic and historic.

Alternative A

Develop an integrated Steens Mountain Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan for all WSRs in the CMPA and Steens Mountain Wilderness. All areas in the wilderness would be classified in a similar way (no separate Management Areas). There would be no limits on party sizes, and no restrictions on dogs in the wilderness. The use of catholes and proper disposal of toilet paper would be encouraged. There would be no restrictions on camping or recreational stock. Self

registration at selected trailheads would be encouraged. Minimal maintenance would be conducted on Little Blitzen, Big Indian, and Wildhorse Lake trails. No new trails would be constructed and inappropriate user created trails would be reclaimed. There would be no campsite restrictions. Length-of-stay in the wilderness would be limited to 14 days. The wilderness would be inventoried to establish baseline conditions and to collect monitoring data for resource and social effects and to establish the desired conditions. As outlined in the Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan, two years of data collected in 2003 and 2004 would be utilized to establish the baseline conditions. The monitoring data would then be evaluated after three years and management actions would be modified, if necessary, to achieve the desired conditions.

Alternative B

Develop an integrated Steens Mountain Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan for all WSRs in the CMPA and Steens Mountain Wilderness. The wilderness would be classified into two Management Areas. Within the Gorges Management Area, five individual canyons would be identified. No dogs would be allowed in the wilderness. Management of party sizes would limit groups to a maximum of six individuals and nine recreational stock, except for Native American use. All human waste and toilet paper would be required to be packed out of the wilderness. No camping would be allowed at Wildhorse Lake or in any RNA. Use of existing established campsites would be required. Tying recreational stock to trees would not be allowed. As outlined in the Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan, two years of data collected in 2003 and 2004 would be used to establish the baseline conditions. Monitoring data would then be evaluated after three years to determine whether the following thresholds have been exceeded, which would determine the implementation of appropriate management options as outlined in Section 2.21.2. Based on monitoring, management options would be implemented throughout a Management Area or individual canyon, as appropriate, unless otherwise identified.

Campsite Condition Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- No greater than 20 percent of campsites within an individual canyon at Campsite Condition "heavy" in two of three consecutive monitoring years at Level I; in three of four consecutive monitoring years at Level II; and in four of five consecutive monitoring years at Level III. - No campsites at Campsite Condition "extreme" in any monitoring year.
Uplands	- No greater than 20 percent of campsites within the Management Area at Campsite Condition "heavy" in two of three consecutive monitoring years at Level I; in three of four consecutive monitoring years at Level II; and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - No campsites at Campsite Condition "extreme" in any monitoring year.

A campsite at Campsite Condition "extreme" would allow the implementation of management options for that specific campsite.

Campsite Density Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- Two campsites per linear mile, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I; in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II; and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- Four campsites per square mile, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I; in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II; and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Perception of Solitude Guideline				
Management Area	Guideline			
	Campsite Encounters	Trail/Route Encounters	Large Group Encounters	Crowding Perception
Gorges	Two per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Six per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	One per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Less than ten percent increase in visitors reporting to be moderately to extremely crowded, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	One per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Three per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	0.5 per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Less than five percent increase in visitors reporting to be moderately to extremely crowded, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Trail Condition Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- 20 percent increase in the density of trails per acre, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 25 percent increase in the width or depth of trails in an individual canyon, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- Ten percent increase in the density of trails per acre, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 20 percent increase in the width or depth of trails in the Management Area, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Length-of-Stay Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- 25 percent increase in average length-of-stay for all parties in the wilderness, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- 20 percent increase in average length-of-stay for all parties in the wilderness, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Recreational Stock Use Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- 25 percent increase in root exposure at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 25 percent increase in tree girdling at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 25 percent increase in manure present at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- 20 percent increase in root exposure at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 20 percent increase in tree girdling at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 20 percent increase in manure present at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Alternative C

Develop an integrated Steens Mountain Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan for all WSRs in the CMPA and Steens Mountain Wilderness. The wilderness would be classified into two Management Areas. Within the Gorges Management Area, five individual canyons would be identified. Dogs would be allowed in all areas but would be required to be under voice or physical control. Management of party sizes would limit groups to a maximum of nine individuals and 12 recreational stock, except for permitted historic uses and Native American use. Catholes for human waste would be required and must be at least 150 feet from all water sources, campsites, and trails. Toilet paper would be required to be packed out. No camping would be allowed in any RNA or at Wildhorse Lake. High lines or picketing of recreational stock would be required. Tying stock to trees would not be allowed. Minimal maintenance would be conducted on Little Blitzen, Big Indian, and Wildhorse Lake trails. No new trails would be constructed and inappropriate user created trails would be reclaimed. Selected closed roads in the wilderness would also be reclaimed. As outlined in the Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan, two years of data, collected in 2003 and 2004, would be used to establish the baseline conditions. The monitoring would be used to determine whether the following thresholds have been exceeded, which would determine the implementation of appropriate management options as outlined in Section 2.21.2.

Campsite Condition Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- No greater than 30 percent of campsites within an individual canyon at Campsite Condition "heavy", in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - No campsites at Campsite Condition "extreme" in any monitoring year, unless designated.
Uplands	- No greater than 30 percent of campsites within the Management Area at Campsite Condition "heavy", in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - No campsites at Campsite Condition "extreme" in any monitoring year, unless designated.

A campsite at Campsite Condition "extreme" would allow the implementation of management options for that specific campsite.

Campsite Density Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- Five campsites per linear mile, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- Six campsites per square mile, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Perception of Solitude Guideline				
Management Area	Guideline			
	Campsite Encounters	Trail/Route Encounters	Large Group Encounters	Crowding Perception
Gorges	Four per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Nine per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Two per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Less than 20 percent increase in visitors reporting to be moderately to extremely crowded, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	Two per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Four per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	One per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Less than ten percent increase in visitors reporting to be moderately to extremely crowded, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Trail Condition Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- 35 percent increase in the density of trails per acre, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 50 percent increase in the width or depth of trails in an individual canyon, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- 20 percent increase in the density of trails per acre, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 35 percent increase in the width or depth of trails in the Management Area, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Length-of-Stay Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- 50 percent increase in average length-of-stay for all parties in the wilderness, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- 35 percent increase in average length-of-stay for all parties in the wilderness, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Recreational Stock Use Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- 50 percent increase in root exposure at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 50 percent increase in tree girdling at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 50 percent increase in manure present at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- 35 percent increase in root exposure at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 35 percent increase in tree girdling at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 35 percent increase in manure present at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Proposed RMP

Develop an integrated Steens Mountain Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan for all WSRs in the CMPA and Steens Mountain Wilderness. The wilderness would be classified into two Management Areas: the Gorges Management Area and the Uplands Management Area. Within the Gorges Management Area, five individual canyons (Little Blitzen, Big Indian, Little Indian, Kiger and Wildhorse) would be identified where management actions can be initiated separately in each canyon. Dogs would be allowed in all areas but would be required to be under voice or physical control. Management of party sizes would limit groups to a maximum of 12 persons and 18 head of recreational stock, except for historic permitted uses and Native American use. Recommended length-of- stay would be limited to 14 days. Catholes for human waste would be required and must be a minimum of 150 feet (60 footsteps) from all water sources, campsites, and trails. Require all toilet paper to be packed out. Packing out of human waste would be strongly encouraged and may be required for certain permitted activities. Overnight camping would be allowed in the Rooster Comb and Little Blitzen RNAs in historically used areas when consistent with the purpose of the RNA and the Steens Mountain Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan objectives. Camping would be allowed at Wildhorse Lake in a defined area in designated campsites only. No overnight recreational stock use at Wildhorse Lake would be allowed. No camping would be allowed in the Little Wildhorse RNA. Grazing of recreational stock would be allowed, consistent with the standards and guidelines. Tying recreational stock to trees would only be allowed for the loading and unloading of stock. Tying of recreational stock to trees overnight would not be allowed. Pack goats would be highlined or picketed. Other recreational stock may graze freely in the No Livestock Grazing Area of the Steens Mountain Wilderness, except the Little Blitzen RNA where such use would be monitored. The Little Blitzen, Big Indian, and Wildhorse Lake Trails would be maintained and new trails would be constructed as needed to preserve wilderness values and to protect resources from damage. Selected roads in the wilderness would be reclaimed to eliminate evidence of the road.

Inappropriate user created trails would be reclaimed. As outlined in the Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan, two years of data, collected in 2003 and 2004, would be used to establish the baseline condition. During 2005, 2006, and 2007 evaluate monitoring data as outlined in the Steens Mountain Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan. Continue to review monitoring data every three years thereafter and change management options as needed if not within acceptable limits. The monitoring would be used to determine whether the following thresholds have been exceeded, which would determine the implementation of appropriate management options as outlined in Section 2.21.2.

Campsite Condition Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- No greater than 30 percent of campsites within an individual canyon at Campsite Condition "heavy", in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - No campsites at Campsite Condition "extreme" in any monitoring year, unless the campsite is designated.
Uplands	- No greater than 20 percent of campsites within the Management Area at Campsite Condition "heavy", in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - No campsites at Campsite Condition "extreme" in any monitoring year, unless the campsite is designated.

A campsite at Campsite Condition "extreme" would allow the implementation of management options for that specific campsite.

Campsite Density Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- Five campsites per linear mile, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- Six campsites per square mile, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Perception of Solitude Guideline				
Management Area	Guideline			
	Campsite Encounters	Trail/Route Encounters	Large Group Encounters	Crowding Perception
Gorges	Four per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Nine per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Three per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	20 percent increase in visitors reporting to be moderately to extremely crowded, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	Two per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Four per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	One per eight-hour period, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.	Ten percent increase in visitors reporting to be moderately to extremely crowded, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Trail Condition Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- 35 percent increase in the density of trails per acre, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 50 percent increase in the width or depth of trails in an individual canyon, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- 20 percent increase in the density of trails per acre, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 35 percent increase in the width or depth of trails in the Management Area, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Length-of-Stay Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- 50 percent increase in average length-of-stay for all parties in the wilderness, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- 35 percent increase in average length-of-stay for all parties in the wilderness, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Recreational Stock Use Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- 50 percent increase in root exposure at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 50 percent increase in tree girdling at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 50 percent increase in manure present at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.
Uplands	- 35 percent increase in root exposure at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 35 percent increase in tree girdling at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III. - 35 percent increase in manure present at campsites, in two of three consecutive monitoring years Level I, in three of four consecutive monitoring years Level II, and in four of five consecutive monitoring years Level III.

Alternative E

Develop an integrated Steens Mountain Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan for all WSRs in the CMPA and Steens Mountain Wilderness. The entire wilderness would be classified in a similar manner with no Management Areas. Dogs would be allowed in all areas. The use of catholes and proper disposal of toilet paper would be encouraged. There would be no restrictions on camping. There would be no management of party sizes. Recreational stock would be allowed in all areas. High lines or picketing of recreational stock would be allowed and would be required to occur at a distance greater than 150 feet from water sources. Minimal maintenance would be conducted on Little Blitzen, Big Indian, and Wildhorse Lake trails. New trails would be constructed, where appropriate, with increased use and to aid visitor travel. Selected closed roads in the wilderness would be reclaimed, while allowing the use of others as informal stock and hiking routes. Length-of-stay in the wilderness would be limited to 14 days. The wilderness would be inventoried to establish baseline conditions and to collect monitoring data for resources and social effects, and to establish the desired conditions. As outlined in the Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan, two years of data, collected in 2003 and 2004, would be used to establish the baseline conditions. The monitoring data would then be evaluated after three years and management actions would be modified, if necessary, to achieve the desired conditions.

2.22.3.2 **Goal 2 - Manage the wilderness in such a manner that the landscape is essentially unaffected by human manipulation and influences, while allowing natural processes to dominate.**

Objective. Accomplish necessary projects and activities occurring in wilderness with the minimum tool or requirement needed to achieve a desired result. The chosen tool, equipment, or structure would be the one that least degrades wilderness values temporarily or permanently.

Alternative A

No new recreation facilities would be constructed in wilderness or at trailheads. Historic structures would be allowed to deteriorate through natural processes, including fire. Limited maintenance of Nye Cabin would take place only to correct hazards. All fire suppression would be accomplished using the Appropriate Management Response, based on life, safety, and resource values. Noxious weeds and other exotic plant species in wilderness would be controlled using a full range of equipment after a MRDG analysis.

Alternative B

No new recreation facilities would be constructed in wilderness or at trailheads. Historic structures would be allowed to deteriorate through natural processes, including fire. Nye Cabin would not be maintained. Fire would be allowed to play its natural role, except in areas along the wilderness boundary where life and property are at risk. All lightning fires would be considered for wildland fire use. Wildland fires would be confined or contained within natural barriers unless additional measures are necessary to protect life or property values. No prescribed fire would be allowed. Noxious weeds and other exotic plant species in wilderness would be controlled using nonmotorized equipment.

Alternative C

No new recreation facilities would be constructed in wilderness. New facilities would only be constructed at trailheads if resource damage or hazards exist. All facilities (excluding trails) and structures in wilderness would be removed except for historic ones and those needed for grazing or wildlife purposes. Historic structures would be allowed to deteriorate through natural processes, including fire. Limited maintenance of Nye Cabin would take place only to correct hazards. Removal of the Page Springs gauging weir would be considered. Fire would be allowed to play its natural role, except in areas along the wilderness boundary where life and property are at risk. All lightning fires would be considered for wildland fire use. Wildland fires would be confined or contained within natural barriers unless additional measures are necessary to protect life or property values. Prescribed fire would be allowed if needed to maintain the natural condition of a fire-dependent ecosystem or to reintroduce fire where past wildland fire control measures have affected natural ecological processes. Noxious weeds and other exotic plant species in wilderness would be controlled using a full range of equipment after a MRDG analysis.

Proposed RMP

Historic structures could be maintained to preserve them. Nonconforming structures could be removed or allowed to deteriorate except those needed for grazing and wildlife purposes. Fire would be allowed to play its natural role, except in areas along the wilderness boundary where life and property are at risk. All lightning fires would be considered for wildland fire use. Wildland fires would be confined or contained within natural barriers unless additional measures are necessary to protect life and property values. Prescribed fires would be allowed in order to achieve resource management objectives if needed to restore or maintain the natural condition of a fire-dependent ecosystem. The MRDG would be completed to determine if action is necessary and the method of control and range of equipment needed to control noxious weeds in the wilderness. Wilderness management activities not specifically covered in other management options would be managed in accordance with wilderness management goals. Such activities would include, but not be limited to, predator control, horse gathers, and search and rescue.

Alternative E

Recreation facilities would be constructed at trailheads as needed to prevent resource damage. Historic structures would be maintained to preserve them. Nonconforming structures would be removed or allowed to deteriorate except for those needed for grazing and wildlife purposes. Nye Cabin would be managed as a rental cabin. All fire suppression would be accomplished using the Appropriate Management Response, based on life, safety, and resource values. Noxious

weeds and other exotic plant species in wilderness would be controlled using a full range of equipment after a MRDG analysis.

2.22.3.3 **Goal 3 - Manage nonconforming uses of the Steens Mountain Wilderness, allowed under the Wilderness Act and the Steens Act, to have the minimum effect on wilderness values.**

Objective 1. Manage livestock grazing in wilderness under the stipulations of the Congressional Grazing Guidelines (HR 101-405 Appendix A).

The Proposed RMP and Alternatives A and C

Provide reasonable access on established routes within the Steens Mountain Wilderness to grazing permittees for administration of their grazing permits. Specific authorizations are being analyzed in a separate EA. Access authorizations would automatically terminate if the routes are no longer needed for livestock grazing administration purposes.

Alternative B

No mechanized transport or motorized equipment would be allowed for grazing operations in wilderness.

Alternative E

Mechanized/motorized use would be allowed at historic use levels (predesignation).

Objective 2. Provide for the level and type of commercial services necessary to enable the public to use, access, enjoy and understand the recreational and other values of wilderness, emphasizing opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation, inspiration, and solitude.

Alternative A

New proposals would be considered.

Alternative B

No commercial services would be allowed.

Alternative C

The number of outfitters would remain at the current level. No permanent caches would be allowed.

The Proposed RMP and Alternative E

Consider new proposals from outfitters after preparing a needs assessment. No permanent caches allowed for SRP holders or the general public in the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area. The installation, erection or building of temporary or permanent structures is prohibited except for immediate use while camping. The BLM would attempt to avoid crowding and user conflicts by informing large groups and outfitter/guides of each others plans.

Objective 3. Allow for a level of reasonable access for the use and enjoyment of private inholdings while protecting the wilderness values.

The Proposed RMP and Alternatives A and C

Provide reasonable access on designated routes to nonfederal land inholdings within the wilderness area. Specific authorizations are being analyzed in separate NEPA documents. Access authorizations would automatically terminate if the routes are no longer needed for private land inholding access purposes.

Alternative B

No mechanized transport or motorized use would be allowed for inholding access.

Alternative E

Access would be allowed at historic (predesignation) levels.

Objective 4. Manage to prevent and exclude motor vehicle and mechanical transport intrusions into the wilderness either on closed roads or off of roads, except where authorized by permitted use or during emergencies.

Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, B, C, and E

Unacceptable numbers of unauthorized intrusions into the wilderness by motor vehicles and mechanical transport on closed roads or off of roads would result in the loss of recreational opportunities through the restriction of some activities. Controls would be developed to exclude motor vehicles and mechanical transport from the wilderness, as needed.

Unauthorized Motor Vehicle and Mechanical Transport Intrusions Guideline	
Management Area	Guideline
Gorges	- Unauthorized motor vehicle and mechanical transport intrusions are an illegal activity in wilderness and require immediate implementation of Level I management options. - Repeated, documented unauthorized intrusions into the wilderness from any points of access would be assessed for implementation of Level II management options.
Uplands	- Unauthorized motor vehicle and mechanical transport intrusions are an illegal activity in wilderness and require immediate implementation of Level I management options. - Repeated, documented unauthorized intrusions into the wilderness from any points of access would be assessed for implementation of Level II management options.

2.23 Wilderness Study Areas and Parcels with Wilderness Characteristics

2.23.1 Wilderness Study Areas

2.23.1.1 Goal 1 - Manage WSAs so as not to impair their suitability for preservation as wilderness.

2.23.1.2 Management Framework

Wilderness preservation is part of the BLM's multiple use mandate, and wilderness is recognized as part of the spectrum of resource values considered in the land use planning process. WSAs are managed in accordance with the BLM's WSA IMP (USDI 1995b). The Congressional mandate of nonimpairment, the primary standard for interim management, is that land under wilderness review must be managed so as not to impair its suitability for preservation as wilderness. Wilderness values, described in section 2 (c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-577), must be protected in WSAs. The initial task of identifying areas suitable for wilderness preservation has been completed as mandated in the FLPMA section 603, and is documented in BLM 1989 Oregon Final Wilderness EIS and the Wilderness Study Report for Oregon (USDI 1991c).

The WSA IMP takes precedence over other management direction unless the other management direction is more restrictive and protective than the WSA IMP, in which case the more restrictive management would be followed. WSAs are managed under the WSA IMP until such time as Congress makes a determination regarding wilderness designation. The WSA IMP states that activities must comply with specific policy guidance and policies for specific activities, including the following nonimpairment criteria:

1. The use, facility, or activity must be temporary. This means a temporary use that does not create surface disturbance or involve permanent placement of facilities may be allowed if such use can easily and immediately be terminated upon wilderness designation.

2. When the use, activity, or facility is terminated, the wilderness values must not have been degraded so far as to significantly constrain the Congressional prerogative regarding the area's suitability for preservation as wilderness.

Exceptions to the nonimpairment criteria include emergencies such as fire suppression and search and rescue operations; reclamation of effects from WSA IMP violations, emergencies and pre-FLPMA impacts; grandfathered uses or facilities, or valid existing rights; or uses and facilities that clearly protect or enhance the land's wilderness values or that are the minimum necessary for public health and safety in the use and enjoyment of wilderness values.

OHV and mechanized vehicle use in WSAs is limited to existing or designated ways or the WSA is closed to OHV and mechanized vehicle use. Existing ways are those that existed at the time of the wilderness inventory. Designated ways could be the same as or fewer than existing ways because some ways may be closed due to resource concerns. The use of mechanical transport, including all motorized devices as well as trail and mountain bikes, may only be allowed on existing ways and within open areas that were designated prior to the passage of the FLPMA (October 1976). The Andrews MFP recognizes that OHV and mechanized vehicle use occurred on the Alvord Desert playa in the Alvord Desert WSA prior to the FLPMA. OHV and mechanized vehicle use of the Alvord Desert playa does not impair wilderness values and does not preclude Congress from designating the area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The BLM has allowed this use to continue based on the determination that managed OHV and mechanized vehicle use would not preclude future wilderness designation. Should the Alvord Desert playa be designated as wilderness, OHV and mechanized vehicle use would not be allowed on the playa.

Management direction for WSAs not designated by Congress and released from WSA status would be based on management direction provided in the Final RMP and ROD.

2.23.1.3 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Manage existing WSAs so as not to impair their suitability for preservation as wilderness.

Management Common to All Alternatives

The WSAs, which total 678,802 acres (Table 3.23.1) would continue to be managed under the WSA IMP until designated as wilderness by Congress or released from WSA status.

2.23.2 Parcels with Wilderness Characteristics

2.23.2.1 Goal 2 - Manage parcels with wilderness characteristics to protect those characteristics.

2.23.2.1.1 Management Framework

As a result of the settlement of Utah v. Norton, authority for the BLM to designate new WSAs under FLPMA section 202, or manage any additional lands under FLPMA section 603, expired in 1993. The BLM may manage lands newly found to have wilderness characteristics through a variety of land use plan decisions to affect, protect or preserve some or all of the wilderness characteristics. This may include protecting certain lands in their natural condition or providing opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The land use plan decisions include, but are not limited to, VRM class designation, OHV and mechanized vehicle designation, lands and realty designations, and conditions of use to be attached to permits, leases or other authorizations.

2.23.2.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Manage parcels with wilderness characteristics to protect those characteristics.

Proposed RMP, Alternatives A, B, and E

Parcels with wilderness characteristics would not be provided special management status. These parcels would be managed under the proposed strategies for each alternative.

Alternative C

Four parcels (see DRMP/DEIS Map 2.18) with wilderness characteristics would be provided special management consideration: Bridge Creek (1,526 acres), High Steens (629 acres), Lower Stonehouse (2,176 acres), and Alvord Desert (2,033 acres). Protection would include the following designations: OHV and mechanized vehicle use limited to designated roads, Class II VRM, and ROW exclusion. Motorized equipment (chainsaws) could be used in the treatment of vegetation to restore naturalness in the Bridge Creek parcel.

2.23.3 Monitoring

See Appendix Q.

2.24 Wild and Scenic Rivers

2.24.1 Goal 1 – Manage the existing and newly designated WSRs in conformance with the WSRs Act and the Wilderness Act.

2.24.1.1 Management Framework

The WSRs Act (Public Law 90-542 and amendments), section 1(b), states that "certain selected rivers of the nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations." Section 10(a) describes the basic management requirement of protecting and enhancing the values that caused the river to be included in the National WSRs System. The BLM manages 12 rivers that are in the WSRs System. Six are part of the Donner und Blitzen River drainage and were designated when Congress passed the Omnibus Oregon WSRs Act of 1988. A management plan for the Donner und Blitzen River and the five other river segments was completed in 1993. The Steens Act designated an additional six rivers. Mud Creek, Ankle Creek, and the South Fork of Ankle Creek were added to the Donner und Blitzen River System. Wildhorse Creek, Little Wildhorse Creek, and Kiger Creek were also designated. The length of the 12 designated rivers totals 105 miles with the BLM managing approximately 27,324 acres of public land within the WSR corridors. The remaining 4,022 acres within the WSR corridors are state and private land. Under the Steens Act, all 12 of the rivers fall within the CMPA and all but 1,204 acres of the BLM administered lands in the WSR corridors fall within the Steens Mountain Wilderness. A more detailed description of each designated river and its ORVs is located in Chapter 3.

Under the WSRs Act, rivers are classified by Congress as either Recreational, Scenic, or Wild depending on the extent of development and access along each river at the time of designation. All of the designated river segments in the CMPA were classified as Wild by Congress. River segments with a Wild classification are generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds and shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted.

2.24.1.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Protect and enhance the ORVs of the designated WSRs.

Management Common to All Alternatives

BLM administered lands within WSR corridors would be managed to protect and enhance the ORVs for which they were designated. The existing Wild classification would be retained for all of the designated rivers. Under guidance from the Steens Act, where WSR corridors overlap with Steens Mountain Wilderness, the more restrictive management requirements would apply. Several of the river segments have roads, bridges, recreation facilities, historic structures, and other infrastructure that existed at the time of designation. These facilities would continue to be maintained and would be replaced as necessary to provide for public health and safety, as well as resource protection. An integrated management plan has been completed for Steens Mountain Wilderness and the designated WSRs as part of this Proposed RMP/FEIS (See Appendix U).

2.24.2 Goal 2 - Determine the suitability of eligible WSRs. Manage those rivers found to be suitable in conformance with BLM Manual 8351 (WSRs - Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management) for protective management of eligible and suitable WSRs.

2.24.2.1 Management Framework

Section 5(d)(1) of the WSRs Act requires that federal land management agencies conduct eligibility evaluations for rivers within their jurisdiction as part of their resource planning process. All rivers in the Andrews RA were evaluated for WSR eligibility in 1997 for the SEORMP. Each river was reviewed by an ID Team. The first step was to determine river segment eligibility based on free-flowing conditions and presence or absence of ORVs. The second step was to determine tentative river classification (Wild, Scenic, or Recreational) based primarily on the level of development along the river segment, with the Recreational classification for rivers with a greater degree of development and the Wild classification for rivers with the least amount of development.

Of the rivers that were evaluated, 13 were found to be eligible. Since 1997, the status of several rivers has changed. In 2000, three (Wildhorse Creek, Little Wildhorse Creek, and Kiger Creek) of the rivers found to be eligible were designated by Congress as WSRs in the Steens Act. The Steens Act also designated Mud Creek, Ankle Creek, and the South Fork of Ankle Creek as additions to Donner und Blitzen WSR system. These three rivers were not evaluated for eligibility or suitability in 1997 because the majority of land along each river was privately owned. The land ownership along these rivers became predominately public with the completion of several land exchanges also called for by the Steens Act. The remaining ten rivers found to be eligible include Big Alvord Creek, Willow Creek, Threemile Creek, Pike Creek, Mud Creek (different from the Mud Creek described above), McCoy Creek, Home Creek, Little Cottonwood Creek, Van Horn Creek, and Big Trout Creek.

The third step was to complete an evaluation and proposed suitability determination for each eligible river segment identified. Section 4(a) of the WSRs Act specifies the following factors that should be considered in the suitability evaluation and determination: the current status of land ownership and use in the area; the reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the National WSRs System, and the values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the river is not protected as part of the National WSRs System; other agencies, organizations, or public interest in designation or nondesignation; administrative costs; ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area; and historic or existing rights.

In 2003 and 2004, the suitability evaluation and proposed determination for each eligible river were reviewed along with public comments on the DRMP/DEIS. No significant changes to the suitability factors assessed for each river were identified. A summary of the suitability evaluation and proposed determination for each eligible river is located in Appendix N.

2.24.2.2 Management Direction by Alternative

Objective. Protect and enhance the ORVs of rivers determined to be administratively suitable for potential inclusion into the National WSRs System by Congress.

Alternative A

The following eligible rivers would continue to be managed in conformance with BLM Manual 8351 for protective management of eligible WSRs without final determination of suitability:

- Big Alvord Creek - 6.3 miles Wild; ORVs are wildlife and botanic
- Willow Creek - 6.2 miles Wild; ORV is botanic
- Threemile Creek- 4.3 miles scenic; ORVs are fish and cultural
- Pike Creek - 4.2 miles scenic; ORV is wildlife
- Mud Creek - 7.2 miles scenic; ORV is botanic
- McCoy Creek - 30.8 miles scenic; ORV is wildlife
- Home Creek - 5.5 miles scenic; ORVs are scenic, recreational, and fish
- Little Cottonwood Creek - 12.1 miles scenic; ORV is botanic
- Van Horn Creek - 9.9 miles scenic; ORV is recreational
- Big Trout Creek - 20.3 miles scenic; ORV is scenic

Proposed RMP and Alternatives B and E

Based on the suitability evaluation and proposed determination completed for each river (Appendix N) no eligible rivers would be recommended as administratively suitable for potential designation by Congress as WSRs. Unsuitable river segments would be managed in accordance with RMP management objectives.

Alternative C

The following rivers would be recommended as administratively suitable for potential designation by Congress as WSRs:

- Big Alvord - 6.3 miles Wild; ORVs are wildlife and botanic
- Willow - 6.2 miles Wild; ORV is botanic
- Threemile - 4.3 miles Scenic; ORVs are fish and cultural
- Pike - 4.2 miles Scenic; ORV is wildlife
- Mud - 7.2 miles Scenic; ORV is botanic
- McCoy - 30.8 miles Scenic; ORV is wildlife
- Home - 5.5 miles Scenic; ORVs are scenic, recreational, and fish
- Little Cottonwood - 12.1 miles Scenic; ORV is botanic
- Van Horn - 9.9 miles Scenic; ORV is recreational
- Big Trout - 20.3 miles Scenic; ORV is scenic

All rivers found suitable for inclusion in the WSRs system would be managed in conformance with BLM Manual 8351 as if they are designated WSRs until Congress acts on whether to add these rivers into the WSRs system. All suitable rivers would be administered in such a manner as to protect and enhance their ORVs.

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